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OPPOSITION SUMMIT

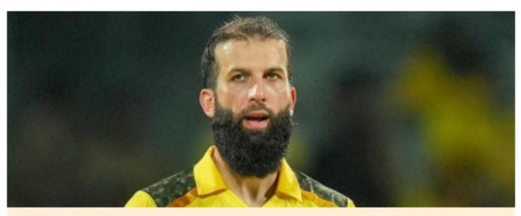
EWS quota could never be 'social justice', says Stalin

NEWS » PAGE 9

AN ALAPPUZHA OASIS

Garbage dump turns mini-forest

SOUTH » PAGE 5



GAME-CHANGER

Moeen spins it CSK's way in high-scoring contest

SPORT » PAGE 13

Over 1,200 trees to be axed for rail projects

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited – KRIDE has received permission to axe more than 1,200 trees to execute the Bengaluru suburban rail project (BSRP) and rail doubling project. Under BSRP, in the first phase, the KRIDE will implement the Corridor-2 project from Baiyappanahalli to Chikkabanavara.

In February, the agency received permission to remove 1,234 trees coming in the way of the alignment between Baiyappanahalli and Lottegollahalli.

For the rest of the stretch till Chikkabanavara, now the order has been issued by the DCF, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), for removing 596 trees.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 3

Surat court grants bail to Rahul, suspends sentence

Court will hear the application against the conviction in a defamation case filed by a BJP MP on April 13; Congress leader says he is fighting a battle to save democracy and truth is his weapon

Mahesh Langa
AHMEDABAD

A sessions court in Surat on Monday granted bail to former Congress president Rahul Gandhi after admitting his appeal challenging the conviction and sentencing in a defamation case filed by a BJP legislator over his 2019 remark about the Modi surname. Mr. Gandhi was sentenced to two years of imprisonment in the case.

The court also suspended the sentence till the disposal of the appeal filed by Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi has filed two applications, first for suspension of sentence, which is essentially an application for regular bail, and the second for suspension of conviction. The court will take up hearing on the appeal against the conviction on April 13. It will further hear the matter on sentencing on May 3. "He was granted bail by the court. The sentencing was also stayed. Now, the application for the stay of conviction is posted for hearing on April 13," a lawyer involved in the matter said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi leaves after filing an appeal in the sessions court in Surat on Monday. VIJAY SONEJI

The Congress leader later tweeted that he was fighting a battle to save democracy and truth was his weapon. "This is a fight to save democracy, against '*Mitrakal*' [cronyism]... In this struggle, truth is my weapon, and truth is my support!" he said.

Mr. Gandhi was convicted and sentenced in the case on March 23. He was disqualified as a member of Lok Sabha the next day.

According to experts, if the conviction is stayed by the court, his Lok Sabha membership could potentially be restored.

The court of Additional District Judge R.P. Mogera issued notice to complainant Purnesh Modi, who filed the criminal defamation case after Mr. Gandhi said "all thieves have Modi surname" at a rally in Karnataka during the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

NEARBY

BJP's Ayanur Manjunath to resign as MLC

HASSAN

Senior BJP leader Ayanur Manjunath has said he will resign as a member of the Karnataka Legislative Council and contest from Shivamogga constituency in the Assembly polls scheduled on May 10.

» PAGE 4

Noida man prime suspect in arson attack inside train coach in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A man from Noida, aged around 30, has emerged as the prime suspect in an arson attack inside a coach of the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express in Kozhikode, Kerala, late on Sunday.

Three persons died while jumping off the moving train to escape from the fire. Nine sustained severe burns. Alarmed passengers pulled the chain, and the train stopped on the bridge over the Korapuzha river.

Forensic experts examining a shirt and other articles found near Elathur on the outskirts of Kozhikode. K. RAGESH

The National Investigation Agency and Kerala's Anti-Terrorist Squad have stepped in to collect details from the local police. Senior police officers said the actions of the suspect appeared premeditated. However, the motive for the attack, which took place around 9.15 p.m. when the train neared Elathoor on the outskirts of Kozhikode, is still unclear. According to eyewitnesses, the suspect carrying two plastic bottles threw an inflammable liquid, possibly petrol, on passengers in the train's D-1 coach and ignited it.

The police identified the deceased as Rahmath Manikoth, 45 and her two-year-old niece Sahara Bathul, and K.P. Noufeeq. The bodies were found early on Monday.

The police said the suspect did odd jobs in north Kerala and lived off his carpentry skills. While they were weighing the security implications, top officials said it was too early to term it a terrorist attack.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

HC orders release of convict on parole to marry his girlfriend of nine years

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka directed prison authorities to release a convict on parole for 15 days to allow him to marry his lover while allowing a joint petition filed by his aged mother and the girl who feared that her family members would get her married to a different person.

"This would be an extraordinary circumstance for grant of parole," the court said while refusing to accept the government's contention that there is no provision in the prison manual for grant of parole to get married as parole is usually granted either to attend or to perform a marriage.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while allowing a petition filed by 63-year-old Rathnamma, the mother of the convict, and 30-year-old Neetha G, both from Kolar district.

Neetha claimed in the petition that she has been in love with Anand for the past nine years, but now she is apprehending that her family would get her married to someone else.

Convict Anand was initially sentenced to life imprisonment by a trial court in a murder case, and High Court later reduced the sentence to 10 years.

He has been undergoing the sentence for the past 6 years.

Rathnamma, who is suffering from various ailments, stated in the petition to the court that both her sons are in prison, and it is her wish to witness at least the marriage of Anand with Neetha.

However, the representation given by Rathnamma and Neetha to the prison authorities for the release of Anand on parole for marriage was not considered by the authorities.

Pointing out that Clause 636 (12) of the Prison Manual gives the discretion to the head of the prison to grant parole on any other extraordinary circumstances, the court said that the present circumstance is an extraordinary one for the grant of parole while referring to parole granted for the marriage of convicts by different other high courts.

The court directed Bengaluru central prison authorities to release Anand on parole from the forenoon of April 5 till the evening of April 20.

Also, the court directed the authorities to stipulate strict conditions, as are usually stipulated, to ensure the return of the convict to jail and that he shall not commit any other offence during the period of parole.

Revenue surge

Provisional figures of direct tax collection for FY23 show that collections exceeded Budget Estimates by 17%

- Net direct tax collection for FY23 was ₹16.61 lakh crore, up 17.6% from FY22
- **Gross corporate tax collection for FY23 stands at ₹10.04 lakh crore, a 16.9% increase from FY22**
- Gross personal income tax collection increased by 24.2% to ₹9.6 lakh crore in FY23

Net direct tax kitty up 17.6%, a tad over target

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's net direct tax collections have risen 17.6% in 2022-23 to touch ₹16.61 lakh crore, exceeding the Revised Estimates target for the year by 0.7%, as per provisional data released by the Finance Ministry on Monday.

The contribution of corporate tax collections in the gross direct tax kitty was ₹10.04 lakh crore, just a tad higher than the ₹9.61 lakh crore paid by taxpayers as personal income tax and Securities Transaction Tax (STT).

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

China reveals plan to 'rename' 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh

Suhasini Haidar
Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

In its latest attempt to lay claim to areas inside Indian territory, the Chinese government has announced it will "standardise" the names of 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh. Releasing a list of the 11 places on Sunday, along with a map that shows parts of A.P. inside the southern Tibetan region, which China refers to as Zangnan, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) even included a town close to the A.P. capital of Itanagar.

India's Ministry of External Affairs did not respond to requests for a comment on the announcement. It has rejected such renaming and standardisation attempts in the past. This is Beijing's third such list on Arunachal Pradesh, attempting to "rename" places by giving them what it calls "standardised geographical names".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

A BG-BGE

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Funds the AAI received from private partners till February

3,245 in ₹ crore. The Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru airports received ₹2,349 crore as an upfront fee for the capital expenditure incurred. PTI

The unclaimed deposits with PSBs transferred to RBI

35,012 In ₹ crore. The transfer was done for deposits of public sector banks which have not been operated for 10 years or more, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad informed Lok Sabha. PTI

The number of tourists Sri Lanka welcomed in March

1.25 lakh tourists. Russians and Indians accounted for the bulk of tourist arrivals, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority informed. This is an impressive jump from the 1.06 lakh arrivals reported in March last year. PTI

The NITs without Board of Governors' chairperson

22 NITs. The Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan informed that the post of Chairman was lying vacant in seven Indian Institutes of Technology as well. The post of chairperson in IITs and NITs is an honorary position. PTI

Andhra Pradesh records excess rainfall in March 2023

301 In percentage. Excess rainfall at 49mm was witnessed in the State against the normal range of 12.2mm. Yanam witnessed rainfall at 121.4mm against the normal range of 9.7mm. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The demand for Scottish independence

How has the demand for independence progressed over the years? What has been the role of the Scottish National Party? Why has it been demanding an independent Scotland? What does the new party leadership mean for Scotland's prospects?

EXPLAINER

Diksha Munjal

The story so far:
Last week, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was quick to reject a call from the new First Minister of Scotland and leader of the governing Scottish National Party (SNP), Humza Yousaf, to hold a second referendum for Scotland's independence from the U.K. Mr. Yousaf took over the party's reigns on March 28 after an intense in-party contest prompted by the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon, the influential leader who led the party's independence push for nearly a decade.

Since when has Scotland been demanding independence?
The independent Kingdom of Scotland was formed in the 9th century and went on to fight wars to remain independent from the Kingdom of England. In 1603, the two kingdoms entered a personal union and were then ruled by the same monarchs. In 1707, due to economic and political vulnerabilities prevailing on both sides, the British and Scottish Parliaments passed the Acts of Union, entering into a political union under the name of Great Britain.

While Scotland could retain some of its decision making powers it did not get equal representation in the united Parliament, and longstanding cultural and political differences remained. Demands for self-governance soon began to sprout, eventually leading to two referendums in 1979 and 1997, resulting in the formation of a new devolved Parliament of Scotland in 1999. This Parliament was given the mandate to form legislation on devolved issues such as health, transport, education, and so on, while the power to legislate on defence, foreign policy, trade, immigration, and currency was reserved. The last referendum for independence took place in 2014, where 55% of Scots voted to stay in the three-centuries-old union while 45% voted to walk out.

A large proportion of Scots see independence from the U.K. as question of self-determination and identity. Scotland accounts for 8% of Britain's population and economy and one-third of its landmass.

What role has the SNP played in the pro-independence movement?
The Scottish National Party was formed in 1934 with the merger of two parties who had been demanding the devolution of powers – the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party. The SNP won its first seat in the British Parliament located in Westminster in a by-election but the MP refused to take up his seat. The party then began circulating petitions for the creation of a devolved Parliament and came to national prominence in 1967 with Winnie Ewing taking the Hamilton seat from the Labour Party.

While a major political victory was still elusive, it was in the 1970s, after oil was discovered in the North Sea, that SNP ran a popular campaign in line with its central ideology of independence. With the iconic slogan "It's Scotland's Oil", the party argued that if not for Britain's control over reserved matters, proceeds from the oil would have benefited the Scottish economy and consequently the Scots. The party managed to get 11 MPs elected to British Parliament in the 70s.

In the 2007 elections to Holyrood, as the Scottish Parliament is known, the SNP won more than 30% of the vote and formed a minority government with Alex Salmond as its leader. As it lacked a majority then, the SNP had to ditch its planned Independence Referendum Bill due to disagreements with other parties. The Bill was finally passed when Mr. Salmond led the Party to a landslide win in 2011 as for the first time in the history of the Scottish Parliament, a majority government was formed.

Touting this as a "once-in-a-generation" moment, the SNP asked David Cameroon's British Government to grant it a Section 30 order – a technical term for a provision that temporarily allows the Scottish Parliament to pass a law on an issue otherwise reserved for Westminster.

The U.K. granted its consent which led to a formal national referendum for independence in Scotland in 2014 which saw an 85% turnout. However, amid concerns over how an independent Scotland would actually function without British assistance and other details left to be worked out, pro-independence voters lost to those who voted to stay. A disappointed Mr. Salmond resigned from SNP leadership and Nicola Sturgeon stepped in.

She reinvigorated the party's demand for independence, especially after the 2016 Brexit vote in the U.K., when she began campaigning for a second referendum or "indyref2". Ms. Sturgeon argued that Scotland had once again been robbed of its right to self-determination as Britain decided to walk out of the European Union despite the fact that 62% of the Scottish people voted to remain in the alliance. She has since made repeated attempts at getting the U.K. to consent to a referendum. After SNP won another Scottish election in 2021, joining hands with the Greens party which also demands independence, Ms. Sturgeon sent another appeal for a Section 30 order. However, then British PM Boris Johnson rejected it, saying that it should not happen for another 40 years.

Why the demand for independence?
The SNP government says that people who live in Scotland should have the right to decide if they want to be an independent country. To relinquish doubts over the future of Scotland after independence, the SNP has been coming out with White Papers on its vision for "building a new Scotland". It currently gets a bloc grant from the British government for a large part of its annual expenditure which it plans to substitute with oil revenues from the North Sea once its gets independence. It says that instead of using the North Sea oil revenues to invest in future generations, the U.K. is using them to fund its current expenses, which undermines the interests of Scots. It also plans to rejoin the EU, to expand its trade in the bloc, and to receive other associated benefits. The SNP also plans to keep using the British pound Sterling as its currency after independence.

It also argues that Scotland is different from the U.K. in that its electoral system is already fairer and more proportionally represented than the U.K. It says it stands for different things – more open immigration policies, a faster push for green transition, free university education and geriatric care, taxation on higher earners, and inclusion of the LGBTQ community. It also believes that the U.K. could make other decisions like Brexit in the future that would undermine Scottish interests.

What is the U.K.'s stand?
The British government believes that the SNP has failed to give a clearer picture on how issues of pensions and healthcare would work in an independent Scotland. It has also warned Scotland that if it rejoins the EU, it would lead to the creation of a hard border between Scotland and Britain. Before the 2014 referendum, the Economic Affairs Committee of Westminster had highlighted that the retaining of the sterling as Scottish currency would be problematic as the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England, which forms policy for the U.K., could not entertain the interests of a separate country. It also said that Scotland would find it difficult to assume its share of U.K.'s public debt, which runs into billions. Besides, the decommissioning of North Sea Oil would also have economic and trade implications for Britain.

Aside from impacts on the Defence and trade strategy, former British civil servant Philip Rycroft pointed out to the London-based think tank Chatham House that perhaps the "biggest impact" of Scotland leaving the centuries-old Union in the current geopolitical environment, would be on "perceptions of Englishness among the English themselves, who make up 85% of the U.K.'s population, and the projection of Englishness as a national identity" to the world.

What lies ahead?
After Mr. Johnson's rejection of her demand for British consent, Ms. Sturgeon had planned to hold in 2023, a "consultative plebiscite" – a non-binding referendum in Scotland without a green light from Westminster.

In November 2022, however, the U.K.'s top court ruled that such a referendum could not take place. Refusing to give up her party's push for independence, Ms. Sturgeon declared a new strategy – that her party will make the next British general election or the Scottish Parliamentary election as a "de facto referendum" for independence, where SNP would stand on the sole issue of independence.

After her shock resignation this February, the new First Minister Mr. Yousaf is left with the difficult task of realising the party's central vision of independence. He has expressed that he is not wedded to the idea of the "de facto referendum". His priority is to first build support for independence among Scottish citizens. Recent polls show that the support for a 'yes' vote on independence has dropped to 39% in the country, less than it was during the 2014 referendum.

For a free nation: A pro-Scottish independence campaign rally, in central Glasgow, Scotland in September 2014. AP

THE GIST

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak rejected a call from the new First Minister of Scotland and leader of the governing Scottish National Party (SNP), Humza Yousaf, to hold a second referendum for Scotland's independence from the U.K.

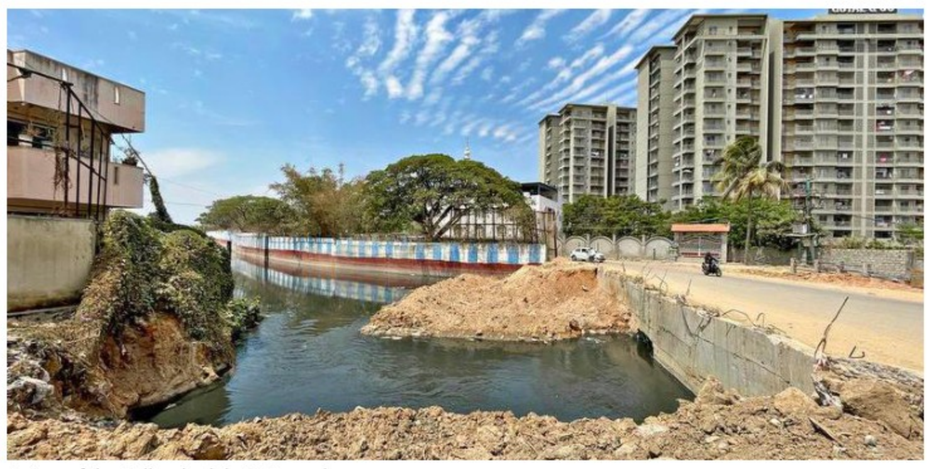
In the 1970s, after oil was discovered in the North Sea, the SNP ran a popular campaign in line with its central ideology of independence. With the iconic slogan "It's Scotland's Oil", the party argued that if not for Britain's control over reserved matters, proceeds from the oil would have benefited the Scottish economy.

A formal national referendum for independence in Scotland was held in 2014 which saw an 85% turnout. However, amid concerns over how an independent Scotland would actually function without British assistance, pro-independence voters lost to those who voted to stay.

Rejuvenation of Bellandur, Varthur lakes moving at a snail's pace

The BDA, which is the custodian of the two lakes, was supposed to complete the work by May 2022. However, it's still going on, and residents and lake activists are disappointed

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU



A view of the Bellandur lake in Bengaluru. SUDHAKARA JAIN

It became a landmark in Bengaluru for all the wrong reasons, but what is said to be the largest lake in the city still has a long way to go before it can get a shot at its glorious self again.

With only a month to go before the delay in meeting the deadline for Bellandur lake's rejuvenation clocks a full year, the water body continues to bother residents around it, this time for different reasons.

Bellandur and Varthur lakes are being rejuvenated by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA). The BDA, which is the custodian of the two lakes, was to complete the rejuvenation work by May 2022. However, it's still going on, and residents and lake activists are disappointed.

Progress of work

On Monday, former NGT court committee member T.V. Ramachandra from the Indian Institute of Science visited the Bellandur lake site office and reviewed the progress of the work and the design of the wetland.

When *The Hindu* visited the lake, the BDA's workers were seen removing the silt, but action is yet to be taken on a few illegal encroachments in the form of shacks. Though there are marshals to keep vigil, people have dumped garbage at a few places. There is water, but one can see it is not clean.

The desilting work, which is ongoing now, was stopped for almost four months after heavy rain last year wreaked havoc.

"There is not much action to speed up the lake rejuvenation and complete it soon. It's been nearly two years, and the work is still going on. Illegal structures on the buffer zone are not completely removed," Prof. Ramachandra said.

Residents unhappy

The local residents who have been fighting for the rejuvenation of the two lakes are unhappy. Jagadeesh Reddy of Varthur Rising said, "Authorities are not following the guidelines and directions of the NGT, the High Court and the Supreme Court. The authorities have not taken any steps to implement NGT Committee recommendations since 2019. The officials responsible should act. We have been following the rejuvenation work and will fight till it is completed."

Mr. Reddy said they would meet the Karnataka Chief Secretary and explain the situation and also request to complete the work soon. In 2016, the State government appointed an expert committee which drafted recommendations to solve the issues related to Bellandur and Varthur lakes. But the recommendations are yet to be implemented by authorities, he added.

Dumping of silt

Meanwhile, officials from BDA said the work was stopped earlier due to the villagers' protest against the dumping of lake silt at the designated quarry near Vittasandra.

"The work was going on well until the dumping of silt at the quarry was opposed by the villagers. However, the work has been resumed now, and it will be completed by May," an official said. NGT had identified quarries to deposit the silt at Mylasandra and Vittasandra villages.

Around 30 lakes in the city are currently being rejuvenated by BBMP in the city, out of which 15 are undeveloped.

Lake marshals not paid

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) marshals who are guarding Bellandur and Varthur lakes have allegedly not been paid salaries for the last few months. A marshal, on the condition of anonymity, confirmed that they had not received salaries from December 2022 and have been in a very difficult position.

Since starting their service in March 2018, they have been foiling at least one attempt to dump waste into the lake every day, and residents living in the vicinity of the lake say the presence of the marshals is making a difference.

Mr. Reddy said, "The marshals who are working tirelessly have not been paid salaries. The lake marshals are doing very good work by keeping a tab on the people who are dumping debris illegally near the lake. I request the BBMP to give the salary of marshals soon." However, BBMP officials did not responded to the allegations of non payment of salary to marshals.

'Belur rathotsava will be held as per temple manual'

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

Belur MLA K.S. Lingesh said the Channakeshava rathotsava (annual chariot festival) in Belur will be held as per the temple manual. There will be no change in the annual festival that will begin on Tuesday.

Speaking to mediapersons in Hassan on Monday, the MLA said that recitation of the Koran had been going on for many years.

Earlier, a moulvi (Muslim priest) from Dodda Meduru village would read excerpts from the holy book on a pedestal. However, for the past few years, the moulvi read out the excerpts in front of the chariot. This year, the moulvi would read out the excerpts on a pedestal, the MLA said.

Representatives of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal also held a media conference where they said that they would oppose recitation of the Quran in front of the temple chariot.

"The temple manual does not mention reciting the Quran in front of the chariot. This practice should be stopped. We will protest if the administration allows it," said Rakshith Bhardwaj, a Hindutva activist.

Techie killed, friend injured in freak accident

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 24-year-old software engineer was killed and her friend injured when the scooter they were riding lost control and slipped on the NICE Road on Sunday.

The deceased, Sulochana, who was riding pillion, and her friend Ananth Kumar were heading from Koramangala towards Mysuru Road.

According to the police, Ananth Kumar was riding fast, and the air in the rear wheel of the scooter reduced suddenly. As a result, Ananth Kumar lost his balance. The two riders fell and sustained severe injuries.

Ananth was wearing a branded helmet, while Sulochana was wearing a substandard half-helmet.

Due to this, she sustained fatal injuries, said the police.

Passersby rushed the duo to a private hospital, where Sulochana succumbed on Monday morning, while Ananth Kumar is undergoing treatment.

The Kengeri traffic police have registered a case against Ananth Kumar, charging him with rash and negligent driving and causing death due to negligence.

Boy found dead near railway track

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 15-year-old boy was found murdered near the railway track near Pillanna Garden in K.G. Halli police station on Monday.

The deceased, identified as Satish, a resident of Tannery Road, was working in a stable in Lingarajapuram.

On Monday morning, his body was found by passersby who informed police.

Crime scene

Police rushed to the spot and shifted the body and recovered a wooden log near the scene of crime suspected to have been used to commit the murder.

Probe on

The police are investigating to the ascertain the reason behind the murder.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client ('**Client**') is desirous of entering into sale and development transactions in connection with the immovable property morefully described in the **'Schedule'**hereto and hereinafter referred to as **'Schedule Property'**. The present owner of the Schedule Property being Mr. Ashwathappa @ Ashwat, son of Munishamappa, residing at Moodigonahalli Village, Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural ('**Owner**') has represented that he is the absolute owner of the '**Schedule Property**', as detailed in the Schedule hereto, with unrestricted rights of alienation over the same, save and except the rights created with (i) Mr. Mohan A., son of Ashwathappa, residing at KempatiMynahalli Village, Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural as the agreement holder of 11 Guntas; and (ii) VagichirI Venkata Satyanarayana, son of VargichirIAnjanayalu, residing at 5-16-37A, SarveBootivari Street, Kaavali, Nalluru, Andhra Pradesh as the agreement holder of 03 Guntas ('**Agreement Holders**').

Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person/s other than the present Owner and Agreement Holders, asserting any right, title, charge, lien, interest or claims whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property are hereby called upon to submit to the undersigned, their objections, if any, to the proposed transaction in connection with the Schedule Property. The said objections must be in writing, together with documentary proof of such claim/s and should reach us at the address given below within a period of 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this Notice. If no such objections are received, it shall be deemed that no one else other than the present Owner and Agreement Holders have any right, title, interest or claim whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property and our Client would be at liberty to proceed with the transaction in connection with the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE
(Description of the Schedule Property)

All that piece and parcel of immovable property being revenue land bearing Survey No. 39/4 (earlier part of Survey No. 39/1), measuring 22 Guntas situated at Karahalli Village, Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on the:

East by: Lands in Survey No. 39/2 belonging to Venkataramanappa;
West by: Road;
North by: Lands belonging to Narayanaswamy; and
South by: Land belonging to Munishamappa.

Date: 04.04.2023, Place: Bangalore

Tejas Khiraiya
Partner,
Dharma Law Partners,
507, Westminster Building,
Cunningham Road, Bangalore - 560053

SURAKSHA ASSET RECONSTRUCTION LIMITED
(Formerly known as Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Private Limited)

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Emai Id: admin@surakshaarc.com, **website:** surakshaarc.com

POSSESSION NOTICE
[For immoveable property]
[Under Rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Limited (Formerly known as Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Private Limited) (acting in its capacity as trustee of SARPL 001 Trust) ("Suraksha ARC") being assignee of the financial assets from Yes Bank Limited vide Assignment Agreement dated September 30th, 2016 under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the "SARFAESI Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated February 22nd, 2020 (The said "Notice") calling upon **1) M/s. Bharat NRE Coke Limited** (Borrower/Mortgagor represented through its Erstwhile Liquidator Mr. Shashi Aggarwal and now Ms. Varsha Bagri) **2) M/s Gujarat NRE Coke Limited** (Guarantor represented through its Liquidator Mr. Sumit Binani) **3) Mr. Arun Jagatramka** (Personal Guarantor) **and 4) Mrs. Mona Jagatramka** (Personal Guarantor) to repay the amount mentioned in the said Notice being **Rs. 1,41,25,75,111/- (Rupees One Hundred and Forty One Crore Twenty Five Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand One Hundred and Eleven Only)** as on December 11th, 2019 together with further interest and charges thereon till realization within 60 days from the date of the said Notice.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Mortgagor(s)/ Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act read with rule 8 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 31st day of March of the year 2023.

The Borrower's in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Suraksha ARC for an amount of **Rs. 1,41,25,75,111/- (Rupees One Hundred and Forty One Crore Twenty Five Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand One Hundred and Eleven Only) as on December 11th, 2019** together with further interest and charges thereon till realization.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Exclusive Charge over an extent of 47.07 acres out of the total extent of 79.07 acres situated at Survey Nos. 85(p) to 87(p), 93(p) to 99(p) & 111(p) at Belur Industrial Area (Growth Centre Dharwad) within the limits of village Mummigati Hubli, Garag Taluk, Dharwad.

PROPERTY BOUNDRIES:

BOUNDARIES	**EAST**	**KIADB Land**
	WEST	**Road No. 10 & KIADB Land**
	NORTH	**Road No. 16 & KIADB Land and Cart;**
	SOUTH	**KIADB Land & Cart Road**

Date: 31.03.2023
Place: Dharwad, Karnataka

Authorized Officer
(Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Limited)
(Acting in its capacity as trustee of SARPL 001 Trust)

HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I
7th Floor East Wing, Swarnajayanthi Commercial Complex, Ameerpet, Hyderabad.

Tender Notice No. HMDA/DEV/SE-I/10/2022-23 Date: 31-03-2023
REMEDIATION OF HUSSAIN SAGAR LAKE IN HYDERABAD, TELANGANA, INDIA

Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority invites Global Invitation for Request for Proposal (RFP) to Design, Procure, Implement Proven technological intervention to arrest odour nuisance, algal blooms and to improve water quality from the reputed National/ International agencies in single stage three cover system (Cover-I-Eligibility Criteria, Cover-II - Technical Proposals, Cover-III - Financial Proposals). The scope of work, eligibility criteria and other details can be seen in the notifications in the website www.hmda.gov.in

Contact Person: Smt. Ch. Param Jyothi, Superintending Engineer-I, Mobile: 09849909811, Email: superintendingengineerhmda@gmail.com

Pre-Bid Meeting date: **17.04.2023 at 11:30 AM @ O/o. Superintending Engineer-I, 7th Floor, Swarna Jayanthi Complex, Ameerpet, Hyderabad.**

Proposals last date of submission: **24.04.2023 upto 15:00 Hrs (IST).**

Sd/- Superintending Engineer-I, HMDA

DIPR R.O. NO. : 7-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24, DATE: 03-04-2023

ANDHRA PRADESH POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
Door No. 33-26-14D/2, Near Sunrise Hospital, Kasturibaipet, Vijayawada - 520010, Andhra Pradesh.

TENDER NOTICE
Date: 03-04-2023

Tender Notice No. APPCB-12028/1/ 2023-SS-CL-APPCB Date: 30.03.2023

Bids are invited through GeM portal for supply of real-time continuous water & wastewater quality monitoring systems to install to the pipelines discharging effluent into coastal waters, on river stretches and at STP outlets and their operation & maintenance.

The tender document along with the schedule can be downloaded from **gem.gov.in.**

The last date for submission of bids against the tender is: **02.05.2023 by 05.00 pm.**

For details, contact: **9177303281.**

Sd/- MEMBER SECRETARY, APPCB, VIJAYAWADA

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL
ASC CENTRE & COLLEGE
AGRAM – POST, BANGALORE-560007
Phone: 080 25550677 **Website: www.apsasc.edu.in**

Tender Notice

Sealed tender are invited for construction of 02 x Prefabricated Classrooms. Tender Enquiry/Form (also uploaded on website www.apsasc.edu.in for reference) to be collected from school office after payment of ₹1,000/- (DD in favour APS ASC Centre & College) from **04/04/2023 to 24/04/2023** (1000hrs to 1300hrs). Last date to submit filled tender form is **25/04/2023** at **1130 AM**.

Presiding Officer
For School Management

PUBLIC NOTICE

Before the Hon'ble Central Government Registrar of Companies, Bangalore

In the matter of sub-section (3) of Section 13 of Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 and rule 17 of the Limited Liability Partnership Rules, 2009

and

In the matter of the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008, Section 13 (3) and In the matter of M/s. **OSKO AVIAN PHARMA LLP** having its registered office at Govindamma Manvi Complex, No.28 (Old No.1602), 2nd Floor, East End Main Road, 9th Block Jayanagar, Bangalore, Karnataka – 560069.

...Petitioner

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the LLP proposes to make a petition to Registrar of Companies, Bangalore under section 13 (3) of the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 seeking permission to change its Registered office from the state of "Karnataka" to the state of "Telangana".

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the LLP may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by Registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition supported by an affidavit to the Registrar of Companies, Bangalore , within 21 (twenty one) days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the petitioner LLP at its registered office at the address mentioned above.

For and on behalf of
OSKO AVIAN PHARMA LLP
Sd/- SAVITA G RAO
Designated Partner
(DIN: 09199724)

Date: 04-04-2023
Place: Karnataka

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OUR BELOVED MOTHER

Smt. **RAJESWARI LOGESAN,**(91)
W/o. Late C. Logesan
passed away peacefully on
1st April 2023.
The last rites will be held on
5th April 2023 at 3 pm
at C-3 1st floor, Brownstone Apartments, Mahalingapuram, Chennai-600034.
Contact: 044 79620574, 9884041505

Deeply mourned by

Dr. Dhinakar Logesan & Dr. Manjula Dhinakar
Saraswathi. U & Udayanarayan
L. Hari Bhaskar & Judith Bhaskar,
Aushitha & Mithun,
Abiram & Pratheeksha, Shreya & John,
Arvind & Vishva, Sanjay & Le-tien,
Sarina, Oliver and Gabriella.

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LEGAL NOTICE

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (ORDER 5, rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)
In the court of Sh. Parveen Singh
Additional District Judge-11 (Central)
Room No. 110, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
CSDJ/621556/2010
Gauri Shankar Gupta
Versus
Chaudhary Beni Prasad & Ors.
To,
Sh. Ritu Singhal (D9e)
W/o Sh. Mukesh Singhal
D/o Chaudhary Shyam Sundar
At :- 12, Second Main Stage, 3rd Floor, B.E.L. Road, Banfluru-94, Karnatka

WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons. It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on **16-05-2023 at 10 AM**, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte.
GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the court on 27-03-2023.
Sd/
Additional District Judge-11 (Central)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
Seal

LEGAL NOTICE

COURT NOTICE
BEFORE THE HON'BLE ECC COURT, THRISSUR, KERALA
ECC. 9/2021
Soman T.L. etc
:Applicants
Shijin P.S., S/o. Shillo,
2nd Floor, W 174 K # 756,
Near DLF Westend Heights,
BG Road, Bangalore-560 068.
:1st Opposite Party
Where as it has been proved to satisfaction of the court that the opposite party above named cannot be served in the ordinary way of service. Hence this proclamation under Order 5 Rule 20 CPC is hereby issued against him and should appear personally or through his counsel on **13-04-2023 at 11.00 A.M.** failing which exparte proceedings shall be taken against him.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court this
BY Advocate A.R. Rajagopalan
Counsel for the Applicants

GARMENTS

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Mobile : 73495 98454
SUKHI ARCADE, 175, Chickpet Main Road, Bangalore - 560 053.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF 57th ADDL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE MAYOHALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-58)
O.S. NO. 25156/2022

BETWEEN :
M/s. ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore 560001
Represented by its Manager and Power of Attorney Holder Mr. Rohith Ali. M. ...Plaintiff
And
Mr. RAVI KUMAR. N. & Another ...Defendant

Summons To Defendant No. 1 and 2

1. Mr. RAVI KUMAR. N.
S/o. Mr. Made Gowda Nanja Reddy Aged About 39 Years, Prop. The Mobile Track, No. 706, 45, 42, 2nd Cross, 3rd Main Road, 3rd Block, Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore-560 010.
2. Ms. SAVITAH. R.
D/o Mr. Made Gowda Rache Gowda, Aged About 33 Years, No.106,3, 7th Cross, Cholarayapalya, Magadi, Bangalore- 560 023.

WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs.7,72,867.31/- (Rupees Seven Lakhs Seventy Two Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Seven and Paise Thirty One Only)** apart from future interest of 18.50% p.a., in O.S. **No. 25156/2022** and same is pending adjudication in CCH 58, Before 57th Addl. City Civil & Sessions Judge. Mayohall, Bengaluru.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SAVITHA Manjunath W/o Manjunath Gangadharappa residing at No.332, 2nd Floor, 7th Main, Nagendra Block, BSK 3rd Stage, Bengaluru -560050 have changed my name to Savitha Nanjundappa Sadashiva Murthy vide affidavit 31-03-2023 before B. V.Nagabhushan Notary, Bengaluru.

WE, MR.SHINE Kuriakose and Mrs.Anupa Abraham residing at No.23, Anugraha, Gangamma Temple Road, Jalahalli PO, Bangalore-560013 have changed our minor son's name from Alan Shine to Alan Kunnath Shine vide Affidavit dated 03.04.2023 sworn before Notary P.G.Unnikrishnan, Bangalore.

LOST & FOUND

I, NALIN kumar Jain have lost my marks card of D Pharma 2nd year. Reg number is G509032. If anyone found it please return it to #303,17th Main, Muneshwara Block, Bangalore -560026, M: 7204071581.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I AM Shobha B S wife of Venkatesh Goudra Basavalingappa, staying at F 102, Santhosh Paradise, Sahakaranagara bengalore. Today while travelling near Sahakaranagara we have lost my site original sale deed copy ref number 23007, 2006–2007 site number 161 and khata number 762 and dc convertion number BDS/ALN/SR 165/2001–02 dated 03.11.2001 and same has registered date K R puram sub register office dated 13.10.2006 in the name of shobha b s. In case if anyone found this documents please return to the above address.Contact number 9686083415

FROM THE ARCHIVES

ISTOCKPHOTO

On defamation law: a blow against freedom of speech and expression

The Supreme Court has always had an ambivalent relationship with the freedom of speech and expression, treating free speech more as an annoyance than a right. Its defamation law judgment continues that long, unfortunate history

Gautam Bhatia

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi was recently sentenced to two years of prison over a 2019 defamation case. In this article, dated May 16, 2016, Gautam Bhatia explains the colonial history of the criminal libel law and how it stands as an impediment to freedom of speech.

At the dawn of the 17th century, Englishmen were in the habit of challenging each other to violent duels in order to avenge personal insults. Public disorder was frequent and the authorities decided to step in. To obviate the need for duels, they began to prosecute defamation as a criminal offence. So was born the notorious "criminal libel". Truth was no defence since a true defamatory statement was as likely to lead to a breach of peace as a false one. There was even a saying, "the greater the truth, the greater the libel." Two hundred and fifty years later, in 1860, the British imported their idea of criminal libel into the newly-minted Indian Penal Code (IPC). Section 499 of the IPC criminalised intentionally defamatory statements. True statements were not exempted, unless they also happened to be made for the "public good".

World has moved on

On Friday, however, none of this seemed to matter to the Indian Supreme Court. Dismissing a petition filed by Subramaniam Swamy challenging the constitutionality of Section 499 of the IPC (Dr. Swamy was later joined by a whole host of figures across the political spectrum, including Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal), the court kept the 1860 provision, with its 17th century roots, entirely intact . In order to keep such an onerous offence on the statute books, the court had to construct novel arguments which will have serious and unfortunate implications for the freedom of speech and expression in the coming years.

Using reputation as right

First, it held that the right to "reputation" was protected under Article 21 of the Constitution which guarantees "life and personal liberty". Now, Article 21 only protects the individual's life and liberty against interference by the state. Notwithstanding this minor textual hurdle, the Supreme Court declared that the right to free speech under Article 19(1)(a) had to be "balanced" against the right to "reputation" under Article 21. The court never explained how this balancing exercise was to be carried out, but simply asserted that since reputation could not be "crucified" at the altar of free speech, criminal defamation was constitutional.

The two moves that the court made – the first, to elevate "reputation" to the level of a fundamental right, and second, to have it prevail over free speech – have no basis in either the text or the structure of the Constitution. They are also dangerous moves. Over the last 30 years, along with its PIL jurisdiction, the court has radically expanded the scope of the right to "life and personal liberty" under Article 21. Article 21 has been held to include the right to sleep, and the right to a pollution-free environment, among other things. For the most part, the court has used this expanded definition to force the state to undertake various "social justice" and welfare measures for the benefit of citizens. But on Friday, the court did something else. Instead of using Article 21 as a shield to protect the individual against State persecution or indifference, it used it as a sword to cut down the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. There have been hints of this before in the court's jurisprudence, but on Friday, this new doctrine of "death by Article 21" emerged as a serious threat to the future of constitutional rights. Article 21 has now become so vast, that if its use as a sword becomes a regular feature, then it will likely soon swallow up the rest of the fundamental rights chapter.

Invoking 'constitutional fraternity'

The court's second argument was to invoke something that it called "constitutional fraternity". It held that criminal defamation law protected the feeling of fraternity – or solidarity – between members of a society. While this may sound fair enough, there is a slight problem. "Constitutional fraternity" is not a part of Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which specifically limits the circumstances under which the state can restrict speech to eight enumerated categories. It is also nowhere in the fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution, so the question of "balancing" free speech against constitutional fraternity does not arise. The word "fraternity" is mentioned in the Constitution's preamble, as an aspirational goal for the newly independent Indian Republic, alongside "liberty" and "equality" – the three great slogans that originated with the French Revolution. And it was always meant to be that – an abstract concept and a rallying cry, signifying a dream and a utopia. It was never meant to become a tool to broaden the scope of restrictions upon fundamental rights.

Apart from its broad, almost undefinable nature, there is something particularly unfortunate about using "fraternity" to cut down civil rights. The existence of "fraternity" alongside liberty and equality is due to the realisation that in a deeply unequal society, guaranteeing civil rights ("liberty") and equality before law are not enough. "Fraternity" signifies a common humanity, an end to the exploitation of human beings by other human beings. As B.R. Ambedkar observed, in his last speech to the Constituent Assembly: "...Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them."

Fraternity, then, was meant to complement civil rights, not to destroy them.

The Constitution's framers did not use this symbolic term for a court to come along 66 years later, and appropriate it for the purposes of subordinating individual rights to some mythic notion of community harmony, entirely submerging the individual within the society.

Silences and omissions

There are, therefore, serious problems with the court's stated justifications for upholding the constitutionality of criminal defamation.

Equally problematic are the silences, the arguments that the court failed to engage with. For instance, it made no mention of the fact that Section 499 does not allow for "honest mistake" as a defence. This omission is especially glaring because this very Supreme Court, 22 years ago, had found that the civil law of defamation, as it then stood, was unconstitutional and a disproportionate restriction upon free speech, since it did not allow for "honest mistake". Last week's judgment creates a bizarre legal situation where criminal liability for defamation is attracted at a lower threshold than civil liability! Equally disappointing is the court's cursory, one-paragraph dismissal of the claim that criminal defamation creates a chilling effect upon speech.

Such proclamations are easy to make from the high, secure, and insulated bench of the Supreme Court. It is journalists and newspapers, fighting hundreds of frivolous cases in court, who have to deal with the very real consequences.

The Indian Supreme Court has always had an ambivalent relationship with the freedom of speech and expression. From upholding the constitutionality of sedition, blasphemy and obscenity on the one hand, to Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer writing about how "books or bombs" might disturb public tranquillity, the court has treated free speech more as an annoyance to be swatted aside whenever "public interest" demands it, rather than the fundamental right at the foundation of our republican democracy. Its defamation law judgment continues that long, unfortunate history.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian

"Mrs K. A. Dutta, Shillong, wants to know the difference between 'occur' and 'take place'."

" 'To occur' means 'to take place'. But careful writers make a distinction between the two. 'Take place' is used with planned events.

The meeting took place at the college.

'Occur' is used with anything unplanned, unexpected.

The accident occurred here."

"Mr. J. Ranganathan, Kolar, wants to know the meaning of the idiom 'dot the i's and cross the 't's'."

" 'You must dot your i's and cross the t's' means that you must pay attention to details, you must be thorough. When you write, sometimes you forget to put the dot (.) above the letter 'i'. Also you may not cross the 't'. That is you may write the vertical stroke but forget to cross it to make it into a 't'. You shouldn't forget to pay attention to these details. You will not be considered thorough if you don't dot your 'i's and cross your 't's."

"Mr. N. Chandrasekhar Rao, Government Junior College, Kothacheruvu, Anantapur District wants to know which of the following is correct: (a) He died of cancer (b) He died from cancer."

"'He died of cancer' is the generally accepted structure.

What did he die of? He died of cancer. He died of typhoid. He died of hunger.

There was a time when both 'from' and 'of' were acceptable. Now 'from' is used to mean 'from the effects of'.

He died from a wound.
He died from exposure.
He died from inattention."

"Mr. R. Srinivasan, Sri Rama Vilas Technical Institute, Tiruvarur, wants to know the meaning of 'resume' in the sentence: 'Please send in your resume'."

" 'Resume' in this sentence is a noun. This is a French word and pronounced very much in the French way. When it is written, the mark is put on the first 'e' and the final e (é). The word means 'summary', 'curriculum vitae' 'bio-data'. The first 'é' is pronounced like the 'é' in 'bed'. The 's' pronounced 'z'. The 'u' is pronounced like the 'u' in 'full'. The final 'é' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'fate' and 'late'. The stress is on the first syllable."

"Mr. K. Mehta of Udaipur wants to know the difference between 'He spoke like a Professor' and 'He spoke as a Professor'."

"'He spoke like a Professor' means he spoke in a way that a Professor normally speaks. He spoke in the style or manner of a Professor. 'He spoke as a Professor' means that he spoke in his capacity as a professor.

He spoke like a judge. He spoke as a judge.

Published in The Hindu on July 7, 1987

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The World Trade Center (WTC), a large complex of seven buildings, in NYC was dedicated on April 4, 1973. A quiz on the two towers, the centerpiece of the WTC, that was tragically brought down in 2001

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Name the American architect responsible for designing the WTC and how many floors did each tower have?

QUESTION 2
Which of the towers was the taller of the two and held the record for the tallest building in the world briefly?

QUESTION 3
What building innovation of Fazlur Rahman Khan, a Bangladeshi-American structural engineer, was used in the construction of the two towers?

QUESTION 4
What was 'Windows on the World' and 'Wild Blue'?

QUESTION 5
What is the significance of 10048?

QUESTION 6
Which multiple-Oscar-winning director made *World Trade Center*, a 2006 docudrama disaster film starring Nicolas Cage.

QUESTION 7
Which legendary Indian sportsperson made news by playing on the WTC Observation Deck in September 1995?

Visual question:
Name this French high-wire artist, who made headlines, by walking between the towers in August 1974. AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This actor, who acted in 21 of Kurosawa's 30 films, was his most frequent collaborator. **Ans: Takashi Shimura**
2. This film was loosely based on the novel *King's ransom* by this writer. **Ans: *High and Low*; Evan Hunter alias Salvadore Albert Lombino**
3. This was the only non-Japanese language film of Kurosawa. **Ans: *Dersu Uzala***
4. Red Beard released in 1965 was the last film of Kurosawa which did this. **Ans: Last collaboration between Kurosawa and Toshiro Mifune**
5. *Sholay* was loosely based on this Kurosawa all-time-classic. **Ans: *Seven Samurai (shichinin no samurai)***
Visual: Graham. T. Allison explained the Cuban Missile Crisis through this interesting approach inspired by this Kurosawa film. **Ans: Rashomon effect; *Rashomon***
Early Birds: Arnasree Chakraborty| M. Suresh Kumar

Word of the day

Abrogation:
an official or legal cancellation

Synonyms: repeal, annulment

Usage: *If the current situation continues, I will abrogate my responsibilities.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/abrogationpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌæb.ɹəˈgeɪ.ʃn̩/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Van attack: Deceased driver's family worried over the future of his children

Idris's brother claims the body bore bruises and suspected burn marks, indicating that he had been tortured

Laiqh A. Khan
MANDYA

Family members and relatives of 38-year-old Idris Pasha, who died after an alleged attack by cow vigilantes at Sathanur in Ramanagara district early on Saturday, are worried over the future of his four young children.

Idris's younger brother, Younus Pasha, told *The Hindu* that the children, including the youngest one who is barely six months old, face an uncertain future.

Idris Pasha's younger brother Younus Pasha (centre) and his brother-in-law Abdul Majeed (right) speaking in Mandya on Monday. M.A. SRIRAM

Bring guilty to book

"We know we cannot do anything about it except to look forward to justice for him by bringing the guilty to book. But we are worried about the future of his children," he said. While the eldest son, who is around six years, is going to school, the remaining are too young to be enrolled in school.

He claimed that his brother's body bore several bruises and suspected burn marks that indicated he had been tortured. "We are waiting for the *post-mortem* report," he added.

Idris was in the vehicle along with trader Irfan and driver Zaheer, transporting around 16 head of cattle from Maddur to Tamil Nadu when the vehicle was intercepted and allegedly attacked by a gang of cow vigilantes, led by Puneeth Kerehalli.

Spare driver

According to Mr. Irfan, Idris was a spare driver, who had been hired to relieve Zaheer on the journey to a Tamil Nadu town. "When the car comprising around six people waylaid our vehicle in the early hours of Saturday, we abandoned it by the roadside and ran into the adjoining fields in the darkness. The three of us were separated," Mr. Irfan told this correspondent over phone. The gang members were armed with lathis and hockey sticks, claimed Mr. Irfan and added that Idris and Zaheer were caught by them while he managed to escape. Mr. Younus heard about the tragedy when he received a call from the trader around 10 a.m. on Saturday soon after which he rushed to Sathanur to find his brother's body.

Idris came from a family of transporters. "His father used to operate a couple of transport vehicles, including trucks, under the name of Upkar Travels in Mandya," said Abdul Majeed, brother-in-law of Idris and Mr. Younus.

But, after the death of their father more than a decade ago, the business was wound up and the sons took to driving assignments for a living. While the eldest son Anees Pasha recently shifted to Hassan, where he is engaged in poultry business, Idris and Mr. Younus took up driving assignments in Mandya, according to Mr. Majeed.

Mr. Younus said his brother usually took up driving assignments for transporting rice, paddy, and other items. Transporting cattle rarely came across his way, he said while adding that he had never narrated any instance of encountering cow vigilantes earlier.

Mr. Irfan too said that Idris was basically a car driver, but had been engaged for the cattle transportation assignment on Friday.

Compensation sought

Meanwhile, SDPI leader Abdul Majeed, who visited the residence of Idris on Sunday, alleged that BJP's brand of "politics of hate" against the Muslims had encouraged self-styled vigilante groups to take to torturing human beings in the name of cow protection.

Apart from demanding the arrest of the accused Puneeth Kerehalli and his associates, Mr. Majeed demanded compensation to the family of Idris on the lines of compensation given by the government to Hindutva activists Harsha and Pravin Nettaru.

From Page One

Over 1,200 trees to be axed for suburban rail, doubling projects

The total length of corridor-2 is 25 km. In another order issued by the same authority for implementing the Yeshwanthpur - Channasandra rail doubling project, the agency has been given permission to fell 698 trees and translocate 38 trees.

The order states that initially, the KRIDE had identified 1,054 trees located between Lottegollahalli and Chikkabanavara. These trees come under the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru territorial range of the Bengaluru Urban Division.

The order states that when the Tree Officer carried out the field inspection, it was found that a total of 290 trees were "missing". Later, the KRIDE was directed to re-enumerate trees coming in the way of the project. In its revised estimate, the agency sought permission to remove 764 trees.

For the public notice issued by the DCF BBMP, four suggestions and objections were received, raising concern over the loss of green cover. They also demanded action against those involved in missing trees by booking the cases.

Need for the project

In response to the objections, the KRIDE stated that the suburban rail project was much needed to reduce vehicular traffic and bring down pollution.

"The alignment of Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) is almost running parallel to the existing railway track on the adjacent railway land, and hence there is no way to change the alignment to avoid trees. Further, the two tracks of the BSRP are being laid to one side of the existing Indian Railway track. Therefore, the trees standing at the embankment of the proposed tracks, including the proposed station between Lottegollahalli Railway Station and Chikkabanavara Railway Station, are getting affected. Hence, a minimum number of trees will be cut, which are unavoidable due to technical reasons."

The order issued by the DCF directed the KRIDE to retain 135 trees and translocate 47 trees. The order does not have details about the reasons for missing trees and actions initiated by the KRIDE. An official of the KRIDE said, "We are looking into the matter and consulting both the Railway authorities and Forest department officials on the same."

'Self-styled Hindutva fringe elements a serious concern'

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Puneeth Kerehalli, accused of assault and murder of an individual transporting cattle in Kanakapura early on Saturday, first shot to recognition with his virulent speeches against minorities on Facebook a few years ago. He and a few other self-styled Hindutva fringe elements, who spearheaded last year's communal campaign during the January-June period, were flagged by the State police as a "security concern".

"Individuals who have had a social media base and are known to make provocative statements have now graduated to live streaming acts of violence against minorities. Many of them have also floated self-styled Hindutva groups to achieve a social profile. Puneeth Kerehalli is just one of them. Today, there are several such people cropping up even in districts that are not known to have a strong Hindutva presence," said a senior police official.

Puneeth Kerehalli

Mr. Kerehalli recently floated his own organisation Rashtra Rakshana Pade, which has carried out several acts of cow vigilantism.

A senior office bearer of one of the Sangh Parivar affiliates said since 2014, Hindutva as a cause had been enjoying great patronage and many outfits were cropping up. In fact, in every live-streamed video of a cow vigilante act, including the one from Kanakapura, Mr. Kerehalli appeals to people to support him financially to carry on the "struggle to save holy cows".

The FIR that books him for murder also alleges that he demanded ₹2 lakh from the victims to let them go. "There is an ecosystem in the State today where people are ready to support those who claim to fight for Hindutva. While this is a success of the penetration of the ideology, there have been many elements without training in the ideology who are cashing in," the office bearer said.

Need to nip in the bud

"Each problem that is left unaddressed only imbibes a level of impunity and leads to more problems. There are reports that he carries weapons, which speaks volumes of the impunity with which these elements are operating today. These trends should be nipped in the bud, and if it had been done, it would not have led to a murder today," said a senior official who did not wish to be named.

"Records with the police seem to indicate that Puneeth has criminal antecedents. He has posted provocative videos on social media calculated to divide society. Thus there was adequate material and grounds for the police to take stringent preventive action, which could have saved Idrees's life. Now that elections are announced, police should be extremely vigilant and deal with anti-social elements ruthlessly," said former state police chief S.T. Ramesh.

City restaurants not to increase prices of food items for now

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As per practice, the prices of food items are annually raised in April. However, this year, the hoteliers have decided to wait until the Assembly elections are over to decide on it

Providing brief relief to their customers, the Bruhat Bengaluru Hoteliers Association (BBHA) on Monday announced that there would be no hike in the prices of food items at hotels and restaurants for the time being. As per practice, the prices of food items are annually hiked in April. However, this year, the hoteliers have decided to wait until the Assembly elections are over to decide about the price hike.

"Although some standard hotels have hiked their prices, the majority of us have decided to keep the prices as they are for the next few months in order not to burden the customers.

"If the need to hike prices arise a few weeks later, we will hold a meeting and then take a decision," said P. C. Rao, president, BBHA.

Some hoteliers reported that the intention behind the decision not to increase prices was to wait and see how the prices of commodities would change after the election.

"From the information that we have, the price of milk might go up after the elections while the price of LPG might come down. If that would be the case, then we might have to increase prices of coffee, tea and other dairy-based products while the prices of other items will remain unchanged," said a hotelier in Central Business District (CBD).

A few weeks ago, after the price of LPG cylinders was hiked, many roadside eateries and darshinis increased the prices of their food items. The customers had expressed their dissatisfaction at the time.

"It is a welcome decision that hoteliers have decided not to increase their prices for now. When the cost of almost everything is going up these days, we can at least have our favourite food without worrying about emptying our wallets," said Nethra. S.K., a private employee from Banashankari.

Two peddlers arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bagepalli police on Monday arrested two peddlers from Andhra Pradesh and recovered 6.5 kg of marijuana worth ₹5 lakh from them. The accused – Venkatesh, 40, from Kadiri and Venkataramana, 42, from Puttaparthi – were allegedly caught while they were waiting at Kodikonda circle in Bagepalli to deliver the consignment.

The two had kept the packets wrapped in tapes and in the boot space of the scooter.

Text & Context

A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (April 4, Tuesday), the following explainer is available:

- The demand for Scottish independence
  bit.ly/scottishindependenceuk

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 04		
RISE	06:14	SET 18:31
RISE	17:11	SET 05:02
WEDNESDAY, APR. 05		
RISE	06:14	SET 18:31
RISE	17:59	SET 05:38
THURSDAY, APR. 06		
RISE	06:13	SET 18:31
RISE	18:47	SET 06:14

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	33	20
Bengaluru	34	23

Bengaluru Today
35°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant. Spell of thunderstorm is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Etihad Airways flight makes emergency landing at KIA

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An Etihad Airways flight reportedly made an emergency landing at Kempegowda International Airport shortly after take-off on Sunday night as it developed a technical issue. Sources said the flight landed back after cabin pressure dropped.

"An Etihad Airways flight EY237 from Bengaluru International Airport (BLR) to Abu Dhabi (AUH) on Sunday returned to Bengaluru Airport shortly after take-off due to a technical issue. The aircraft performed a normal landing in Bengaluru. The required technical inspections were completed, and the flight continued to Abu Dhabi, where it landed early this morning. The airline apologises to customers for the delay," Etihad Airways said in a statement.

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Elector-population ratio dips from 72.9% in 2018 polls to 68%

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

The elector-population (EP) ratio, which was 72.9% during the 2018 elections, has reduced to 68% in this year's elections. This means, for every 100 eligible electors, the number of registered voters reduced from 72.9 in 2018 to 68 in 2023.

Cleansing of rolls

The decline could be due to the effect of cleansing of electoral rolls and low voter registrations during the 2021 and 2022 summary revisions owing to COVID-19, according to the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) Baseline Survey 2023, commissioned by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka.

While Chikkamagaluru district has the highest EP ratio at 83.3%, Bengaluru Urban has the lowest at 55.8% in 2023. Udupi and Mandya have an EP ratio of more than 80%, while Ballari and Yadgir have less than 65%.

Except for three districts, all the others witnessed a decline in the EP ratio, revealed the survey.

ISEC team

A team of researchers from the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), led by S. Madheswaran, Professor and Head of Centre for Economic Studies and Policy at the institute, surveyed 4,452 persons from 45 Assembly constituencies spread over 23 districts.

Elector-population ratio in 2023

Districts with highest percentage		Districts with lowest percentage	
Chikkamagaluru	83.3	Bengaluru Urban	55.8
Udupi	80.4	Ballari	62.7
Mandya	80	Yadgir	63.4
Ramanagara	79.6	Vijayapura	66.2
Kodagu	79	Bagalkot	67.7

"The EP ratio should be equal to the ratio of 18+ population to the total population. In 2021, the ratio of the 18+ population to the total population turned out to be 73.17% based on the projected population. This ratio was only 68.3% for 2011 based on census data. With the decline in the fertility rate, the total population has not grown at the same rate as earlier leading to a high ratio of the 18+ population to the total population," stated the survey.

> It is disheartening to see that the gap in enrolment is the highest among the 18-19 age group, where only 36.7% have registered and 87.2% among the age cohort 20-29 years. Despite several activities to encourage young voters to register, the increase in the percentage between 2018 and 2023 is not encouraging. This calls for strengthening the Electoral Literacy Club activities at the college level.
>
> **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES BASELINE SURVEY 2023**

"Comparing this year's EP ratio with the ratio of the 18+ population to the total population indicates a gap of nearly 5.2 percentage points. This finding indicates the need for strengthening the registration process and bringing in more unregistered people into the electoral system," recommended the survey.

Decline higher in males

The reduction in the EP ratio is relatively higher in the case of males. The EP ratios for males, as well as females (during 2018 and a majority of the districts during 2023), are higher than the proportion of the 18+ population. This difference between the EP ratio and the 18+ population proportion is more marked for males. This may be because of the recent improvement in the sex ratio, pointed out the survey.

Highest in 18-19 years

"It is disheartening to see that the gap in enrolment is the highest among the 18-19 age group, where only 36.7% have registered and 87.2% among the age cohort 20-29 years. Despite several activities to encourage young voters to register, the increase in the percentage between 2018 and 2023 is not encouraging. This calls for strengthening the Electoral Literacy Club (ELC) activities at the college level. As age increases, it is observed that EP ratio is high and more than 100 for those who are aged above 30 and this calls for further cleaning of the rolls by identifying people who have shifted, died, duplications and repeated names of voters in the electoral rolls," pointed out the survey.

INBRIEF

Vishwanath observes 'repentance satyagraha'

A.H. Vishwanath, former Minister and MLC, observed a 'repentance satyagraha' for playing a role in the formation of the BJP government in the State.

Speaking to reporters later, Mr. Vishwanath said he was repenting for being at the forefront of the efforts to bring the "most historically corrupt" BJP government to power in the State.

He also declared that he was supporting the Congress in the coming Assembly elections in Karnataka. Mr. Vishwanath, however, has ruled out the possibility of resigning from the Legislative Council.

Bommai seeks 'positive' mandate

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel, Union Ministers Bhagwanth Khuba and Rajeev Chandrasekhar during the inauguration of the party election media centre in Bengaluru on Monday. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst allegations by the Opposition parties that the ruling BJP is facing anti-incumbency, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday sought "positive mandate" from people of the State.

"We are seeking a positive mandate and pro-incumbency mandate based on our performance," the Chief Minister said, after inaugurating the party's State election office in Bengaluru.

"We are not like the Opposition Congress that is trying to survive on negativity," he said, while accusing it of "dividing religions" during its rule. "In fact, the economy had crumbled and the State witnessed several communal clashes under the Congress rule," he alleged.

He accused the Congress of hoodwinking people of the State by hushing up their corruption cases with the help of the ACB and also by suppressing the Lokayukta. More than 50 scandals were witnessed during the Congress regime, but the ACB filed B reports with respect to all the complaints.

Alleging that there were too many skeletons of corruption in the Congress wardrobe, he said the Congress did not have moral standing to talk about corruption.

Asserting that there was no question of compromising with corruption, he urged the Congress that has been levelling allegations of taking "40% commission" from contractors to submit any evidence in this regard.

Launching a counter-attack at AICC general secretary Randeep Surjewala for his remarks that the "double engine government is a double engine droha and that the DNA of Modi and Bommai is anti-SC/ST", Mr. Bommai said such remarks were a "comedy of errors" and full of "brazen lies."

He said they were part of the propaganda by the Congress to mislead people and to divert public attention from the non-commitment of the Congress dispensations to the social justice and its betrayal to the SC/ST and OBC communities.

He said the Congress was indulging in such a misinformation campaign after it was taken by surprise to see the increase in reservation for these communities by the BJP.

BJP leader Ayanur Manjunath to resign as MLC

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

Ayanur Manjunath

Senior BJP leader Ayanur Manjunath has said he will resign as a member of the Karnataka Legislative Council and contest from Shivamogga constituency in the Assembly polls scheduled on May 10.

He did not specify whether he would contest as an Independent candidate or from any political party. He had been elected to the Legislative Council from the Graduates' constituency, and his tenure ends in June 2024.

Addressing a media conference in Shivamogga on Monday, Mr. Manjunath said he would show his strength by contesting against former Minister and BJP MLA K.S. Eshwarappa. "I have requested BJP leaders many times to give me an opportunity this time. However, there are no signs of honouring my request. Names of children of some prominent leaders figure in the tentative list," he said.

"Let Mr. Eshwarappa or his son K.E. Kantesh contest from Shivamogga. I will make him understand my strengths," he said.

Mr Manjunath said, "There is a conspiracy to disturb peace in the city before the elections. I wish people in the city were alert about such efforts."

Multiple ticket aspirants expose fault lines in Congress

Senior leaders travel to Delhi for meeting to finalise second list of candidates; party workers apprehensive that KPCC president Shivakumar has been 'sidelining' aspirants who are loyal to Siddaramaiah

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

As senior leaders shifted to Delhi for finalising the second list of candidates in 100 constituencies on Tuesday, signs of fault lines are showing up in the Congress, with challengers staking claim to tickets against well-known faces, and even incumbent MLAs.

This has become a headache for the Congress in several constituencies, as the party has promised tickets to candidates who have joined from other parties.

Karnataka Votes 2023

Seeking a ticket for their leaders for the Karnataka Legislative Assembly elections, a large number of Congress workers, holding placards from different constituencies, staged a protest in front of the party office here on Monday.

Activists from Kadur, Molakalmuru, Raichur, Tarikere, Tirthahalli, Chikkamagaluru, Gubbi, and other constituencies staged the protest.

Some 'sidelined'?

There are apprehensions among the cadre that KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar has been "sidelining" aspirants who played a critical role in holding former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's 75th birthday in Davangere last year. Many aspirants in the 60-member committee set up to hold the "Siddharamotsava" have reportedly not received a positive response from the KPCC, sources said.

Taking stock: KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar watches as supporters of Yogesh Babu, a ticket aspirant, raise slogans in front of the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Monday. PTI

For instance, former Minister Kimmane Rathnakar and Manjunath Gowda are seeking ticket in Tirthahalli. While the former is said to be a loyalist of Mr. Siddaramaiah, the latter seems to be the preferred choice of Mr. Shivakumar. Similarly, in Mangaluru South, there is a strong contention between former MLC Ivan D'Souza, loyalist of Mr. Siddaramaiah, and J.R. Lobo, former MLA.

N.Y. Gopalakrishna, who resigned from membership of the Legislative Assembly on Friday, on Monday joined the Congress in the presence of Mr. Shivakumar and Mr. Siddaramaiah. But some workers from the Molakalmuru constituency have been opposing giving tickets to him.

They have urged the State leaders to field Yogesh Babu in the reserved constituency. Mr. Babu secured 21.8% votes and lost to Minister B. Sriramulu in 2018. In Gubbi too, a section of workers has been opposing fielding S.R. Srinivas, ex-JD(S) MLA. In fact, former KPCC president G. Parameshwara, who hails from Tumakuru, was conspicuously absent when Mr. Srinivas was inducted into the party last week.

Meanwhile, the party's disciplinary committee, headed by former MP K. Rahman Khan, has warned party workers and leaders of initiating action if they post adverse comments against official party candidates on social media.

CEC meeting

The Congress Central Election Committee (CEC) will hold its meeting on Tuesday in Delhi to pick the candidates for the remaining 100 constituencies in Karnataka.

The CEC meeting will be chaired by AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge and will be attended by party's screening committee chairman Mohan Prakash, and senior leaders from Karnataka.

Sources said the names of candidates in 60 constituencies will be announced this week. The party already announced candidates for 124 segments.

Mysuru factory sends 1.3 lakh vials of ink for elections

Shankar Bennur
MYSURU

Come elections, and a 75-year-old factory in Mysuru gets very busy. For, it has a major task to achieve as its product is indispensable in an election.

This Mysuru connection with the country's every election dates back to nearly six decades, as the indelible ink applied on the voters' fingers is solely manufactured at the Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited (MPVL), a government of Karnataka undertaking.

For the Karnataka Assembly elections scheduled on May 10, the MPVL has supplied nearly 1.3 lakh vials of ink. After getting the EC order in February, over 100 workers were engaged. The orders were dispatched a fortnight ago, the company sources said.

A worker filling indelible ink into a vial at the factory of Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited. M.A. SRIRAM

Against orders

The ink is always manufactured against the orders and each vial contains 10 ml of ink. A 10-ml vial can be applied on the fingers of nearly 700 voters, the sources add.

The ink is a result of a "special chemical formulation", and "lasts longer", the company claims.

Reckoned to be one of its kind among PSUs in the country to manufacture indelible ink, the MPVL has been supplying ink for the Lok Sabha, the Assembly, and local body elections.

The ink production began in 1962 based on a special chemical combination formulated by the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), New Delhi, Located in a 7-acre campus at Bannimantap Extension here, the factory has been the lone supplier of ink for elections since 1962.

Founded in 1937 by Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, then Maharaja of Mysore, as Mysore Lac Factory, the company was renamed as Mysore Lac and Paints Limited in 1947 and again rechristened Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited in 1989, after it started production of varnish besides paints.

From other countries

MPVL gets orders for the ink supply from 25-30 other countries also. In 2021, the company exported ink worth ₹8.14 crore. The first export of ink for an overseas election was in 1978-79. MPVL has also registered with the United Nations Development Programme for supplying ink for elections abroad.

A garbage dump that was recast into a lush mini-forest

Sam Paul A.
ALAPPUZHA

Visiting the lush green Shanthisthal at a quiet corner of the 22-acre Christian College campus at Chengannur in Alappuzha district, it is hard to imagine that the place was once a stinking garbage dumping ground.

Today, it resembles a teeming forest ecosystem with trees, plants, small mammals, snakes and chirping birds. Its transformation, which began almost a decade ago, is a source of pride for Biji Abraham, an Assistant Professor of economics at the Christian College, and the institution's biodiversity club. The mini-forest on 15 cents of land is home to 176 trees and plants of 116 species, even several rare, endangered and threatened ones.

Biodiversity grove

"It had become a dead plot after several feet of earth was removed during the construction of the college ground. The people from outside dumped waste there for several years. The dump was close to the women's hostel and the stench became unbearable. We decided to transform it into a biodiversity grove in 2013 under the Biodiversity Conservation Project of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board," says Mr. Abraham, who is also the in-charge of the college Biodiversity Club.

Major facelift: Biji Abraham with visiting students at the Christian College's mini-forest at Chengannur. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Truckloads of waste were removed with the help of the Chengannur municipality. Later, the land was prepared using earth movers. In the initial year, 74 plants with medicinal values were planted. "The following year, we planted trees associated with the 27 '*nakshatras*' as per the Hindu religious faith. It was followed by planting of flowering plants, exotic fruits and other species," says Mr. Abraham, who acknowledges the support of students in developing the green patch.

An ardent nature lover, Mr. Abraham lives close to the campus and this helped him maintain Shanthisthal by regularly watering the plants and applying fertilizers until they attained a certain growth.

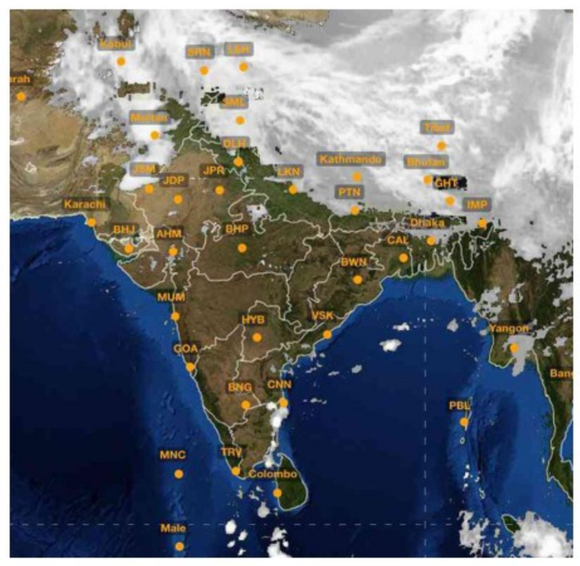
Apart from students of Christian College, the place is frequented by students and researchers from other colleges and universities. "We are glad that Shanthisthal has become a microhabitat. Researchers arrive here to collect specimens. Students also come to study about fungi, tumours and various diseases that affect plants. Last year, a group of students from Mahatma Gandhi University visited the grove to separate alkaloids with anti-cancerous properties from *Desmodium longipes*," he says.

After the setting up of the mini-forest, the college campus recorded about 30 bird species and several butterfly, ant and spider species.

The club last year set up a 'vidyavanam' based on the Miyawaki concept on 5 cents of land. It houses 448 trees and 149 plant species.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/ gusty wind likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	32.7	20.5	Kozhikode	—	34.5	24.7
Ahmedabad	—	37.0	23.1	Kurnool	—	40.5	27.0
Aizawl	7	27.5	13.9	Lucknow	—	34.0	18.8
Allahabad	—	37.4	19.2	Madurai	—	36.8	26.2
Bengaluru	—	34.0	22.5	Mangaluru	—	32.3	22.6
Bhopal	—	36.7	19.4	Mumbai	—	31.2	22.6
Bhubaneswar	—	37.1	24.0	Mysuru	—	35.4	22.4
Chandigarh	0.8	25.5	16.7	New Delhi	—	32.2	16.8
Chennai	—	35.3	28.0	Patna	—	35.5	19.4
Coimbatore	—	36.7	23.4	Port Blair	—	31.7	24.4
Dehradun	—	29.6	13.8	Puducherry	—	35.0	26.0
Gangtok	7	18.0	9.5	Pune	—	36.0	17.9
Goa	—	33.0	20.9	Raipur	—	36.6	23.2
Guwahati	5	27.4	18.5	Ranchi	—	33.6	17.4
Hubballi	—	38.0	18.0	Shillong	0.2	21.2	11.5
Hyderabad	—	36.9	25.3	Shimla	0.1	11.7	7.2
Imphal	6	23.8	14.5	Srinagar	0.8	14.0	7.9
Jaipur	—	34.2	20.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.0	25.7
Kochi	—	32.0	26.6	Tiruchi	—	37.5	25.6
Kohima	3	16.4	10.2	Vijayawada	7	35.6	26.2
Kolkata	—	35.2	23.7	Visakhapatnam	—	32.4	26.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.11	.17	.24	119	124	
Bengaluru	.2	.8	.29	74	72	
Chennai	.4	.13	.43	18	105	
Delhi	.18	.99	125	252	281	
Hyderabad	.11	1	157	58	—	
Kolkata	.37	.23	.18	40	57	
Lucknow	.8	.41	.70	79	118	
Mumbai	.4	118	.93	199	153	
Pune	.11	163	114	88	76	
Visakhapatnam	.17	.42	.42	36	68	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 418 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Sivasagar, Assam recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Two elephants found dead in Hogenakkal range

P.V. Srividya
DHARMAPURI

Two adult elephants were found dead in different reserve forests of the Hogenakkal range over two consecutive days.

Forest Department officials said a female elephant, aged around 16, was found dead in Guthirayan reserve forest. It was sighted by a team on Sunday. Likewise, a tusker was found dead in Pennagaram reserve forest by a field team on Monday. The age of the elephant, whose tusks were intact, is yet to be ascertained.

An autopsy was carried out on the female elephant.

The latest deaths have taken the State-level toll to six in less than a month. Last month, two female elephants and a makhna were electrocuted by a farm fence in Morappur in Palacode. A barely four-month-old calf, which was rescued from a well and relocated to Theppakadu camp, also did not survive.

District Forest Officer K.V.A. Naidu told *The Hindu* that natural and unnatural (except poaching) deaths inside the forests were common. "Unnatural deaths inside the forests may include injuries due to infighting or falls from a cliff, or drowning in rivers, starvation, disease, attacks etc.," the officer said.

The spread of diseases from cattle is another unnatural cause of early death of elephants inside the forest, according to Mr. Naidu.

Kalakshetra faculty facing sexual abuse charges held

The accused, who had returned from an education tour in Hyderabad, had gone into hiding

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

The police on Monday arrested Hari Padman, 46, an assistant professor of the Rukmini Devi College of Fine Arts under the Kalakshetra Foundation, on a complaint from a former woman student of the institution. They said he was on the run for three days, the police said. Last week, the students of the Kalakshetra Foundation resorted to protests demanding the dismissal of four staff members, including Padman, whom they accused of 'inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment'. The State Commission for Women and National Commission for Women also intervened in the issue.The police registered a case on Friday following a complaint from a woman who studied in the institution between 2015 and 2019.

Hari Padman being taken away by the police on Monday. M. KARUNAKARAN

Based on her complaint, Padman was booked under Indian Penal Code sections 354A (sexual harassment), 509 (use of words, gestures or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and section 4 of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Woman Act.

A special police team recorded the statements of five former students in Kerala and two in Chennai to get corroborating evidence. Padman, who had returned from an education tour in Hyderabad, had gone into hiding after arriving at the Chennai airport and switched off his mobile phone, the police said. He was arrested at his friend's house in Madhavaram and brought in for interrogation. Later, the police produced him before a metropolitan magistrate court for remand on Monday.

Meanwhile, foundation director Revathy Ramachandran and deputy director S. Padmavathy met State Commission for Women Chairperson A.S. Kumari and explained the steps taken by the institution. Ms. Kumari told *The Hindu*, "We have asked for the details on the number of complaints handled by the internal committee and action taken by the management. We have asked them not to allow the three other staff inside campus."

Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan passes away in Kochi

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan, 64, former Chief Justice of the Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kolkata High Courts, passed away in Kochi on Monday.

He was the first Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court. He had also served as Acting Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court. He is survived by his wife, Meera Sen, and two children.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of the Opposition V. D. Satheesan condoled Mr. Radhakrishnan's death.

'India could be second largest solar photovoltaic manufacturer by 2026'

K.C. Deepika
BENGALURU

With 110 gigawatts (GW) of solar photovoltaic (PV) module capacity set to come online in the next three years, India will become self-sufficient and will be the second-largest PV manufacturing country after China, says a new joint report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research and Analytics.

The report finds that India's cumulative module manufacturing nameplate capacity more than doubled from 18GW in March 2022 to 38GW in March 2023.

Jyoti Gulia, founder, JMK, and co-author of the report, said a favourable policy environment created by the Indian government is the major driver for this push in India towards PV manufacturing. "Production linked incentive (PLI) scheme may prove to be the necessary catalyst which will significantly augment India's PV manufacturing capacity in the coming years," she said.

Gujarat leading State

"In terms of upcoming PV manufacturing installations, Gujarat is the leading state in India. It accounts for nearly 57% of all the upcoming PV manufacturing capacity. Some major reasons manufacturers chose Gujarat for setting up their PV fabrication facilities include cheaper industrial electricity prices and easy access to ports for imports and exports," she added.

A file photo of a solar power plant at Pavagada in Tumakuru district.

The report's co-author Vibhuti Garg, Director, South Asia, IEEFA, said after India attains self-sufficiency in two to three years, the next course of action should be to challenge and compete for dominance in both quality and scale in the global PV module market. Despite the aggressive market drivers, there are minor hurdles that are impeding the growth of the PV manufacturing industry. Therefore, policy stability is necessary to sustain investor confidence in the market, she added.

Reliance on China

The report identifies some hurdles holding back the domestic PV manufacturing industry from realising its full growth potential, chief among them over-reliance on Chinese imports for upstream components of PV modules such as polysilicon and ingots/wafers.

According to the report, the sustained reliance on China for its raw material is such that almost all (around 95%) of the upstream PV manufacturing capabilities are still in China. Another is the dearth of skilled manpower, especially in the manufacturing of these upstream components, Ms. Gulia added.

What is China doing differently compared to India to be at the top? "China has already achieved economies of scale given the huge PV manufacturing capacity that they have. Also, to bring this market to this huge scale, the Chinese government has offered cheap credit, free land, cheap loans, research funds, tax rebates, and sometimes even cash to support its manufacturing sector. Because of their large-scale integrated facilities and government support, Chinese manufacturers are able to absorb larger shares of the profit of their operational revenues. Thus, they are always able to invest significantly in a robust R&D infrastructure, hence always staying ahead of the curve than the rest of the world," explained Ms. Gulia.

Holistic development

The report recommends that the government augment the PLI scheme to also include more upstream components, PV equipment machinery and ancillary components for more holistic development of the PV manufacturing ecosystem.

"Moreover, as part of the long-term expansion plan, India must aim to build enough PV capacity to satisfy local demand and maintain a healthy global presence to become a viable competitor to Chinese PV products. However, India's current major PV export markets - the U.S. and Europe - are ramping up their own PV manufacturing capabilities. In future, these countries may also potentially become self-sufficient in PV manufacturing. As a result, there is a greater impetus to explore other export markets for Indian tier-1 manufacturers," the report added.

Margadarsi Chit Fund case: CID questions Chairman and Managing Director of firm

The Hindu Bureau
GUNTUR

A team of Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department led by Investigation Officer Ravi Kumar and others questioned Margadarsi Chit Fund Private Ltd (MCFPL) chairman Cherukuri Ramoji Rao and managing director Cherukuri Sailaja Kiron on Monday.

Addressing the media in Hyderabad on Monday, CID Superintendent of Police Amit Bardar said that as per procedure, the CID served a notice on Mr. Ramoji Rao and Ms. Sailaja Kiron in the chit fund case on March 27, under Section 160 of the Cr.PC. The officials conducted the inquiry on Monday at their residence in Hyderabad.

The CID officials said that the agency has filed seven cases against Margadarsi Chit Fund

The Crime Investigation Department officials said they had filed seven cases against the company and investigation was conducted pertaining to one of them today.

The CID officials have been investigating the company for alleged violations such as non-payment of subscription amount to the chit account, operation of illegal scheme of deposits and covering up their defaults by offering 4% to 5% interest on the deposits secured from subscribers, illegal diversion of funds pertaining to the chit subscribers towards other investments and others.

Chartered Accountant Kudaravalli Shravan, the official partner of Brahmayya & Co., who was rendering audit services to the company, was remanded to 14 days judicial custody by the third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Vijayawada, last week in connection with the case.

YSRTP chief proposes joint forum to fight for unemployed, youth

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

YSR Telangana Party president Y.S. Sharmila has proposed the formation of a joint political platform, Telangana Students Action for Vacancies & Employment (T-SAVE), led by Professor M. Kodandaram to fight for the rights of youth and unemployed persons.

She made the proposal during a press conference here on Monday, and appealed to all parties to attend a meeting on April 10 to discuss the action plan.

"It is extremely sad to take stock of the hopelessness among the unemployed of the State who have been deceived and taken for a ride by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Against the Biswal Committee report that recommended filling up of 1.91 lakh vacancies, the government has released notification for 33,000 jobs and conducted exams for only 8,000 posts, she said"

But, thanks to the Telangana State Public Service Commission leak scam, even their fate hangs in balance, she added.

"We all have been fighting in our own right, but to tame this government, we need to come together, set aside political differences and have an All-Party Action Committee (APAC)," the YSRTP chief said.

Mission Arikompan: panel visits Idukki, to submit report before Kerala HC tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

A five-member committee appointed by the Kerala High Court visited Chinnakkanal in Idukki on Monday. According to sources, the committee held a meeting at Munnar and interacted with tribal people and farmers from the Chinnakkanal and Santhanpara panchayats.

Ground realities: Members of the committee interacting with a ration shop owner in Idukki on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After the meeting, the committee members visited the ration shop earlier raided by the wild tusker Arikompan at Panniyar, and interacted with the ration shop owner P.L. Antony. They also visited the kumki elephant camp at Cement Palam and 301 Colony and other areas facing human-elephant conflicts.

Ramesh Babu, senior lawyer and *amicus curiae* appointed by the court, said a detailed report will be submitted before the court on April 5 when it is set to consider the case. "A high-level committee meeting will be held in Kochi on Tuesday," he said.

Meanwhile, the residents of Sinkukandam and 301 Colony continued their protest seeking the capture of Arikompan.

Lives at stake

The Karnataka police must act with alacrity in bringing murderers to book

The scourge of murders, where cattle traders or transporters have been attacked by self-styled "cow vigilantes", has surfaced again in Karnataka – on Saturday, a 39-year-old assistant driver of a van transporting cattle was allegedly tortured and killed by a right-wing activist and his associates. The incident must be seen as one among recurring murderous acts across States, but predominantly in the north of India. From the murder of Pehlu Khan in Rajasthan, who was transporting cattle, to Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh, on the suspicion of storing cow meat – it was proven to be false – to two tribal men lynched by alleged activists of the Bajrang Dal in Seoni, Madhya Pradesh, and scores of such incidents, the venality of those committing the murders has been matched by the acuity by law enforcement agencies in implementing cattle slaughter laws to find a pretext for these acts while not bringing those responsible to book. That the murderers of Pehlu Khan were acquitted for the lack of prompt police action is emblematic of this trend. The recurrence of these acts is also a consequence of the emboldening of these right-wing activists, who show little regard for human lives as opposed to their perceived religious beliefs on cow slaughter. Another common factor that is more often the case is that these acts recur in States ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and are generally condoned by its fellow travellers in the Sangh Parivar.

The Opposition in Karnataka has rightly sought to put the government in the dock and to highlight how this could foster communal disharmony. Any dilly-dallying by the Karnataka police in bringing the guilty to book will be a signal that this is a repetition of the injustices that were committed against Pehlu Khan and others. More so, the repeated nature of these acts calls into question the outcome of recent jurisprudence on cattle slaughter, the 2005 judgment by the Supreme Court in particular which banned cattle slaughter based on an expansive interpretation of the Directive Principles of state policy, besides Articles 48, 48A, and 51(A) of the Constitution. This judgment had overturned an earlier ruling in 1958, which had limited the ban only to "useful" cattle engaged in agriculture and husbandry. The judgment's interpretation resulted in States, mostly led by the BJP, to come up with stringent laws on cow slaughter, and the stigmatisation of Dalits, Muslims and tribals for their dietary habits and dependence on cattle products for a livelihood, besides allowing for impudent behaviour by so-called "vigilantes". It is not enough to condemn these acts; it is time, yet again, for a judicial rethink on legislation over cow slaughter.

A balancing act

New government in Finland will have to involve parties with different interests

Sanna Marin, one of Finland's most popular politicians, has been praised for helping her country navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic and for her decisive response to Russia's Ukraine invasion. Her personal approval rating remains at 64% (69% among women). Yet, the centre-left-green coalition she was leading was voted out of power on Sunday in an election that was largely dominated by economic issues. In the final results, the conservative National Coalition emerged as the largest party with 20.8% vote share, while Ms. Marin's Social Democrats ended up third (19.9%), after the anti-immigrant, populist Finns Party (20.1%). In Finland's proportional representation system, the Social Democratic Party was expected to improve its tally to 43 seats from 40 in 2019, but Ms. Marin's coalition partners, including the Centre Party, the Left Alliance and the Green League suffered major setbacks. Petteri Orpo, leader of the National Coalition, would be given the first chance to form the government. But the National Coalition, which is projected to have 48 seats, should show the support of at least 101 legislators in the 200-member Parliament to form the next government.

When Ms. Marin, 37, became Prime Minister in 2019, heading a coalition of five women-led parties, she was one of Europe's youngest leaders. Her predecessor, Antti Rinne, a former trade unionist, was in office for only six months. Sceptics doubted Ms. Marin's ability to keep the coalition together; her term was also rocked by the pandemic and the Ukraine invasion. But she made difficult decisions without losing the confidence of her allies. She stepped up borrowing and expanded social spending and investments to cushion an economy that was battered by the pandemic. For Finland, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine brought back grim memories of the 'Winter War', the 1939 Soviet invasion of Finland. Even though Finland lost territories, the country remained neutral throughout the Cold War. But the Ukraine war changed the strategic calculus of its leaders and Ms. Marin rallied public opinion on NATO membership. Yet, the economic costs of the Ukraine war partly led to her downfall. Amid surging inflation and high borrowing, Mr. Orpo attacked Ms. Marin's handling of the economy, while the Populist Finns slammed the country's immigration rules. The economic uncertainties, which were accentuated by the war, allowed both parties to make gains. Mr. Orpo, a seasoned politician, will now have to decide whether he should go with the Social Democrats or the populists. Either way, he will find it hard to find a balance between parties with different ideas while tackling defence and economic challenges.

A fresh COVID-19 data interpretation approach

Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya

is a consultant physician and epidemiologist. He is the founder-director of the Foundation for People-Centric Health Systems, New Delhi

There is a fresh spike in COVID-19 cases in India, a surge that is attributable to at least three reasons. One, the XBB.1.16 recombinant variant which has higher transmissibility in comparison to other circulating variants. Two, the recent viral flu surge (H1N1 and H3N2 sub-types) which resulted in health-care providers recommending higher COVID-19 testing. Three, the availability of COVID-19 testing at low cost and the COVID-19 surge that is nudging people who have a cough and cold to get themselves voluntarily tested. This has sparked off discussion that a fresh wave is imminent in India. In fact, since the last and third national COVID-19 wave in January 2022, there have been a few spikes every now and then, with each episode triggering fears of a fresh wave (fortunately, these fears did not come true).

Impact of ill-informed discourse

In the last three years, there has been another development that has been cause for concern. A few groups have emerged which continue to, and very vocally, argue that COVID-19 is very dangerous and has not gone. These groups, or the 'Covid-forevers', bearing an uncanny similarity with two century-old anti-vaccination groups, invoke 'post-COVID' and 'long COVID' as arguments to say that even though infections are mild, COVID-19 continues to be a serious disease. Their signature mark is they do not want to discuss anything else other than COVID-19. Based largely in the West, the 'membership' of these groups is expanding in India.

There is every epidemiological evidence to show that COVID-19 has become endemic in India. However, a disease becoming endemic does not mean zero cases or no seasonal surge. The last pandemic before COVID-19 was that of the swine flu (H1N1) pandemic, of 2009-10. It was caused by influenza A virus new subtype H1N1. It was a pandemic that got over in 2010. Since then, the H1N1 subtype is causing a seasonal rise in flu cases, and is the most commonly circulating influenza A virus subtype. In the past two months in India, there has been a lot of news about the H3N2 flu, but the other and more commonly circulating subtype of flu has been that of H1N1. However, and rightly, we have not responded to H1N1 like the way we did in 2009-10. And this should be our response as well to the variants of SARS-CoV-2.

We need to be mindful that public discourse on fresh waves is not completely innocuous. Though the medical impact has been blunted, any discussion about a fresh surge has a social impact in terms of creating panic and fear, apprehensions in parents about sending their children to school (thus, causing learning loss) and on livelihoods. The burden of these indirect impacts is borne disproportionately by the poor, the disadvantaged and those whose voices rarely matter.

> The flawed and continued use of older parameters has to make way for a data-driven and holistic approach to interpret the evolving situation in India

Drop the old parameters to track disease

One of the reasons for a fresh discourse on a wave is a new sub-variant XBB.1.16 (which essentially is a recombinant of the Omicron variant). It is one of 100-plus recombinant variants and one of 700-plus SARS-CoV-2 variants which have been reported in the last three years. It is not a variant of concern as Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Omicron were. In the last three years, on average, around four to five new variants of SARS-CoV-2 have been detected every week. Variants will continue to emerge, and thus we should embrace the rise and fall in COVID-19 cases.

For a country with a population of 1.4 billion and with SARS-CoV-2 around, a certain number of cases will be reported on a sustained basis. Let us understand this using the example of tuberculosis (TB), another respiratory disease. Every day, an estimated 7,000 new TB cases happen in India. The bacterium for TB is far more stable while SARS-CoV-2 is prone to mutations and variants. Therefore, one of the first steps in India for the experts is to arrive at a consensus on the number of COVID-19 cases which are expected even when the disease is endemic. This could be in terms of absolute numbers or new cases per 1,00,000 people per week or month.

Another key reason why every spike in cases fuels talk about a fresh wave is the continued use of older parameters of daily new COVID-19 cases. However, there is a clear dissociation between infection and disease since the emergence of the Omicron variant.

In the last eight weeks, though the number of daily new COVID-19 cases has gone up by nearly 55-fold, from a very low base, the number of hospitalisations and deaths has changed only marginally. This is why focus on daily new cases has only very limited public health relevance, if any, now.

There is a need for a more objective approach to define parameters to track COVID-19 situations. In public health, the approach should be to collect information to intervene. With targeted and voluntary testing, daily COVID-19 cases and test positivity rates are a very weak parameter as well as a flawed approach – it is influenced by prescriber and citizen care-seeking behaviour. Therefore, a better parameter would be to focus on and track moderate to severe illnesses and hospitalisation.

This needs to be made even more granular by further desegregation of data by those who were admitted after COVID-19 infections, and those who were already in hospitals and incidentally tested positive. At this stage when COVID-19 is endemic in India, the dashboard parameters of cumulative cases, cumulative hospitalisation and cumulative deaths are also not relevant.

It is time we start tracking, comparing and analysing COVID-19 data on a monthly and weekly basis for the calendar year. New dashboard indicators should begin tracking for the year 2023 onwards, which will give us an idea of trends – these were obliterated by cumulative data for the last three years.

Various forms of surveillance (genomic, wastewater, influenza-like illness and Severe Acute Respiratory illness) are going to be integral tools for response in the long term. However, some of these datasets should be linked to clinical outcomes. The multiple agencies working in these systems should work with clinicians, data, and public health experts to make real time inferences. The government should also put out this data in the public domain so that independent researchers and academicians can analyse and support the response process.

COVID-19 has become endemic in India and the medical impact of the disease is low. But the virus is ubiquitous.

At this stage, India's response has to be calm and evidence guided. Governments should focus on the public health aspects of rolling out new parameters to track the disease, develop strategies to fight misinformation and 'COVID-forevers', and launch sustained health communication messages about preventing all respiratory illnesses. There is no role of any specific targeted intervention for COVID-19 only. For citizens, it is important not to panic with every spike, not be influenced by unverified social media messages, and to learn to conduct individual self-assessment of risk and take preventive measures according to the health risk.

ECG approach for COVID-19 data response

Looking ahead, the response to the evolving COVID-19 situation needs to be determined by a holistic assessment of the situation through careful examination and interpretation of ECG data: Epidemiological (trend in moderate to severe cases); Clinical (change in symptoms, hospitalisation and outcome), and Genomic and other surveillance (variants, etc.) data. Most importantly, our selection of data for decision making needs to be objective, factoring in the evolving epidemiology of COVID-19 and being solution oriented.

Time to put a price on carbon emissions

Vinod Thomas

is the author of a new book, 'Risk and Resilience in the Era of Climate Change'

In the absence of a price for the use of natural resources such as air and forests, environmental destruction has been part of every country's recipe for boosting GDP growth. But the consequence of this approach has been the relentless emission of carbon, causing runaway climate change. It is time, starting with the biggest economies of the G-20, to agree on valuing nature, including by pricing carbon effluents. India can take the lead, as president of the G-20 this year, in carbon pricing, which will open unexpected avenues of decarbonisation.

Ways of pricing

Three ways of pricing carbon are: the establishment of a carbon tax domestically, as in Korea and Singapore; the use of an emissions trading system (ETS), as in the European Union (EU) and China; and the application of an import tariff on the carbon content, as the EU is proposing. Some 46 countries price carbon, although covering only 30% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and at an average price of only $6 a ton of carbon, a fraction of the estimated harm from the pollution. The International Monetary Fund has proposed price floors of $75, $50, and $25 a ton of carbon for the United States, China, and India, respectively. It believes this could help achieve a 23% reduction in global emissions by 2030.

The economy-wide benefits of carbon pricing in terms of damages avoided (plus revenue generation) generally outweighed the cost it imposed on individual industries in the EU, British Columbia, Canada, and Sweden. A key dynamic is that carbon pricing, by signalling a price for cleaner air, makes investment in renewable energy such as solar and wind, which has huge prospects in India, more attractive.

> A high enough carbon tax can pave the way for decarbonisation as a winning development formula; India, as the G-20 chair, can play a lead role in this

Impact on India

Among the three ways of pricing, India could find a carbon tax appealing as it can directly discourage fossil fuels, while raising revenues which can be invested in cleaner sources of energy or used to protect vulnerable consumers. It could replace the more inefficient scheme of petroleum taxes which are not directly aimed at emissions. By the way, Saudi Arabia and Russia are at the low end of gasoline prices (including taxes and subsidies), China and India in the mid-range, and Germany and France at the high end. In most countries, including India, fiscal policy has set in place the basic structures needed to implement a carbon tax. For example, they can be woven into road-fuel taxes, which are established in most places, and extended to industry and agriculture. Policymakers have to choose the tax rate, which varies widely from Japan's $2.65 a ton of CO_2 to Denmark's $165 a ton set for 2030.

India could start with the IMF figure of $25 a ton. The main obstacle is the argument by industrial firms about losing their competitive advantage to exporters from countries with a lower carbon price. It would stand to reason, therefore, for all high, middle and low-income countries to set the same rate within each bracket.

It might also make sense to allow companies to use high-quality international carbon credits to offset up to a certain percentage of their taxable emissions. The EU excludes transport, where higher costs would have been passed on to consumers directly, Singapore provides vouchers for consumers hit by utility price rise, and California uses proceeds from the sales of carbon permits partly to subsidise purchases of electric cars. Some make a case for exempting "emission intensive trade exposed" enterprises from the carbon tax, but output-based rebates would be superior ways of doing the same.

Communication is important

All said, any type of carbon pricing faces stiff political opposition. When a new, conservative government took office, Australia repealed the 2012 tax just two years after it was instituted. Recent months have revealed the political pressures on decarbonisation: soaring energy prices led the EU to sell millions of emission permits, causing a 10% drop in carbon prices. Sweden may have handled some of these political constraints as well as any by presenting the carbon tax as part of a bigger fiscal package that lowers other taxes and includes new social safety nets. Communicating the idea of wins at the societal level, even in the presence of some individual producers' losses, is vital.

A high enough carbon tax across China, the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan alone (more than 60% of global effluents), with complementary actions, could have a notable effect on global effluents and warming. it could also pave the way to seeing decarbonisation as a winning development formula. as carbon pricing gains acceptance, the first movers will be the most competitive. India, as president at the G-20 summit this September, can play a lead role by tabling global carbon pricing in the existential fight against climate change.

This article draws on work with the Centre for Social and Economic Progress

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop the vigilantism

No words are sufficient to condemn the gruesome murder of a cattle van driver, in Karnataka on Saturday (Page 1, April 3). A growing pattern of pre-meditated and well-orchestrated attacks by antisocials masquerading as moral and cultural vigilantes, is disturbing. What is prevalent in north India is beginning to find its roots in the south, which has to be stopped. What makes the issue even more grave is the audacity with which the perpetrators committed the crime, which shows their scant regard for the law of the land and an intent to disrupt social harmony. As with hate speeches, the top court needs to step in and send out a strong message. Well-coordinated efforts between the Central and State governments, together with punitive measures, are a must.

B. Suresh Kumar,
Coimbatore

Stand of faith leaders

Religious leaders are sadly showing themselves to be out of step with reality regarding marriage as a whole, stating that it is "for procreation, not recreation" (Page 1, April 4). There are many people today who marry for companionship, and with no desire to have children. There is no argument to treat same-sex couples differently from heterosexual couples (who may also have fertility issues), unless one views LGBTQIA+ Indians to be second-class citizens.

Ashutosh Shankar,
Mumbai

Every religion recognises marriage to be a sacred institution and has a tome of specific religious rites and ceremonies and legal procedures to solemnise marriage. The universally acknowledged basic feature of the concept of marriage is the union of people of opposite gender. It is no wonder that faith leaders have joined hands to petition the Supreme Court of India. Hopefully, the Court will realise that marriage is not a subject to tinker with.

Ravi Mathur,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Trains for migrant labour

A number of media channels have reported how north Indian migrant labourers, especially travelling to northeast India, are often seen occupying reserved train compartments, causing great inconvenience to passengers with reserved seats. Migrant labourers travel like cattle. I have seen this while travelling on the Coimbatore-Chennai sector, on northeast-bound trains. One can also find this on such trains originating from Bengaluru. Unfortunately, the Indian Railways have not bothered to find a solution. Most long-distance trains bound for the northeastern States originate in Kerala and Bengaluru. With a huge population of migrant labourers and their families taking up permanent employment in Tiruppur, Coimbatore and Bengaluru, the Railways ought to introduce special trains to make travel easier for these labourers. All they need are ordinary sleeper trains, and not Vande Bharat and Bullet trains.

C.T. Jagadeesan,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Why India should cut down on its salt intake

Bibek Debroy
is Chairman, EAC-PM. Twitter: @bibekdebroy

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The seemingly innocuous act of consuming salt can have dangerous repercussions when taken in excess. Excessive sodium intake contributes to the rise of hypertension, heart disease, and stroke. The dangers often lurk undetected, warranting urgent attention and a revaluation of our dietary choices. An average Indian's sodium consumption is more than double the physiological need and dramatically exceeds the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended daily intake of <5 g of salt for adults.

The WHO recently published the 'Global Report on Sodium Intake Reduction,' which sheds light on the progress of its 194 member states towards reducing population sodium intake by 30% by 2025. Regrettably, progress has been lethargic, with only a few countries making considerable headway towards the objective. Consequently, there is a proposal to extend the deadline to 2030.

India has enacted voluntary measures to decrease sodium in food supply and promote healthier food choices. The WHO devised a sodium score, ranging from 1 (least implementation) to 4 (highest implementation), for each member state based on factors such as the extent of implementation of sodium reduction and other related measures. India's score of 2 signifies the presence of at least one voluntary policy, emphasising the need for more rigorous efforts to address this health concern.

Reducing sodium intake

But why is it essential for India to reduce its sodium intake? First, empirical evidence highlights the strong correlation between reduced sodium intake and decreased blood pressure. As per a seminal paper in the *The BMJ*, lowering sodium intake by 1 gram per day (2.5 grams of salt) leads to a 5 mm Hg reduction in systolic blood pressure (BP) for individuals aged 55, causing an estimated 22% decrease in stroke incidence and a 16% decrease in myocardial infarction incidence. This evidence suggests that salt reduction is a cost-effective and practical approach to preventing cardiovascular disease.

Second, elevated BP is a critical risk factor for cardiovascular disease, the foremost cause of mortality worldwide. In 2001, it contributed to approximately 54% of strokes and 47% of coronary heart diseases globally. This statistic has gone up since then.

Third, the staggering economic impact of cardiovascular disease on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is estimated at $3.7 trillion between 2011 and 2025 due to premature mortality and disability. This figure represents an alarming 2% of the GDP of LMICs. Notably, the World Economic Forum projects that the Indian economy alone faces losses surpassing $2 trillion between 2012 and 2030 as a consequence of cardiovascular disease. This highlights the urgent need for effective interventions to mitigate the economic and health consequences of cardiovascular disease in LMICs.

Cardiovascular disease and hypertension pose significant challenges in India, primarily due to four reasons. First, as per data from the Registrar General of India, WHO, and the Global Burden of Disease Study, cardiovascular diseases have emerged as the primary cause of mortality and morbidity. In the last 25 years, the age-adjusted cardiovascular disease mortality rate has risen by 31%.
Hypertension has been identified as the leading risk factor for such diseases in India.

Second, data from the National Family Health Survey-5 reveals that hypertension is more prevalent among men aged 15 and above compared to women in the same age group. Hypertension is more common in southern States, particularly Kerala, while Punjab and Uttarakhand in the north also report high incidence rates.

Third, the pre-hypertensive population, defined by systolic blood pressure levels of 120-139 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure levels of 80-89 mmHg, warrants attention. At the national level, 38.5% of women and 49.2% of men are pre-hypertensive, with a higher prevalence in the northern States. There is sufficient evidence to confirm that Indians with BP readings between 130 and 139/80-89 mmHg face significant risks of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and premature mortality. Many Indians classified as pre-hypertensive are now included in the newly defined stage-I hypertension by the American guidelines.

Fourth, the 2020 Report on Medical Certification of the Cause of Death shows that circulatory system diseases account for 32.1% of all documented deaths, with hypertension being a major risk factor.

Government initiatives

The Union government has initiated several voluntary programmes aimed at encouraging Indians to decrease their sodium consumption. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has implemented the 'Eat Right India' movement, which strives to transform the nation's food system to ensure secure, healthy, and sustainable nutrition for all citizens. In line with this goal, the FSSAI launched a social media campaign called 'Aaj Se Thoda Kam.' However, the average Indian's sodium intake remains alarmingly high. Evidence shows an average daily consumption of approximately 11 grams.

India needs a comprehensive national strategy to curb salt consumption, as current measures have fallen short. A multi-pronged approach, engaging consumers, industry, and the government, is crucial. Collaboration between State and Union governments is essential to combat hypertension, often caused by excessive sodium intake.

An average Indian's sodium consumption is more than double the physiological need and dramatically exceeds the WHO's recommended daily intake

A political storm over privacy

Phone tapping allegations have been made against rival TDP and YSRCP regimes

STATE OF PLAY

V. Raghavendra
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Last year, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed a resolution to set up a committee to find out if the previous Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government had bought and used the controversial Israeli spyware, Pegasus. The issue has not died down yet as the investigation is incomplete.

In March 2022, the YSR Congress Party claimed that the government headed by N. Chandrababu Naidu had gained unauthorised access to public data for use for election purposes and had also tapped phones, including of some Opposition leaders. What started off as a whisper in the YSRCP soon blew up into a major political storm and hit the TDP hard.

The Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed a resolution to constitute a seven-member House Committee to probe the "unlawful interception of communications, data theft and illegal transmission causing infringement of citizens' rights" during 2016-19.

The House Committee held meetings with senior officials of the Home and Information Technology Departments and gathered information on methods through which the spyware was procured and used for keeping some individuals, including Opposition leaders, under surveillance. The House Committee led by Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy submitted its interim report in September 2022. It said that there had been unauthorised transmission of public data which had been acquired through surreptitious means. But it also added that the gravity of the offence warranted a deeper investigation. Accordingly, on March 15, 2023, Legislative Assembly Speaker Thammineni Seetharam announced that the committee would be given another six months to submit its final report.

But just over a month before the committee was given more time to dig deeper into the issue there were new allegations of phone tapping, this time from the YSRCP's own MLAs – Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy and Anam Ramanarayana Reddy. The issue then gained more attention when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that unlike the TDP government, she had spurned an offer for ₹25 crore to buy Pegasus when a delegation of the Israeli company met her. TDP leader Nara Lokesh refuted the allegations that the government purchased the spyware.

While the reasons for the complaints of the two MLAs could be political, their statements cannot be overlooked since they pertain to the privacy of individuals, which the Supreme Court declared is a fundamental right and an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Mr. Sridhar Reddy wrote a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah requesting an inquiry into the incident and is awaiting a response. Mr. Ramanarayana Reddy, who was among the few close confidantes of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, said his phones were tapped and his security was reduced, apparently because he raised a banner of revolt.

The two MLAs might perceive this to be part of a political vendetta unleashed by their own party, but the issue flagged by them, as also the one that cast serious doubts on what the TDP government had allegedly done in collusion with some private companies, merits a speedy and thorough investigation. If anyone is guilty of these charges, punishment must be meted out and a foolproof mechanism for protecting individual privacy and data must be evolved. The allegations of surveillance on politicians cannot be ignored either. This is a sensitive issue which harks back to the sensational cash-for-vote scam in Telangana in 2015. Then, phones of the then Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had been reportedly tapped.

It is pertinent to note that only the agencies of the Central and the State governments have the right to get phones tapped in compliance with stringent norms laid down under the Indian Telegraph Act, and that too in exceptional circumstances.

The findings of the House Committee are eagerly awaited. Whether the YSRCP MLAs' complaints will be taken seriously or discarded as lacking substance and being politically motivated remains to be seen. The facts in such high-profile cases are rarely allowed to come out. One can only hope that these allegations about two rival parties indulging in such wrongdoing are probed, that the outcome will be different this time, and that the laws of the land are upheld.

Stray dog bites are a cause for concern; vaccination helps

Vaccinating 70% of dogs and sustaining that effort helps limit rabies cases

DATA POINT

Thanmaya Prakash & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

This year, at least four children died of dog bites in India – two siblings aged seven and five in Delhi, a two-year-old in Surat, and a four-year-old in Hyderabad. Footage from the Hyderabad incident spread across social media, provoking outrage. The anger has resulted in housing societies discouraging people from feeding dogs and even employing bouncers to threaten dog lovers.

A week ago, the Bombay High Court said that treating stray dogs cruelly can never be an acceptable approach. It said that taking care of animals is legal and preventing people from doing that would amount to an offence. The order was passed in a case filed by a resident of a society in Mumbai who was prevented from feeding stray dogs. In a similar case in February, the same court observed that if dogs are fed and cared for, they would become less aggressive. In September last year, a Supreme Court Bench orally observed that while feeding dogs is a humane act, protecting people from stray dog attacks is also important.

At least five High Courts – Bombay, Allahabad, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Delhi – have weighed in on the issue since 2022. The Animal Welfare Board of India issued advisories in December 2022 on the issue. Over the past year, dog attacks have caused nationwide concern.

There were around 1.5 crore stray dogs in India in 2019. Approximately 1.5 crore instances of dog bites were recorded between 2019 and 2022. **Chart 1** shows the State-wise number of stray dogs, according to the 2019 Livestock Census. In that year, Uttar Pradesh led the list with a stray dog population of 20 lakh followed by Odisha (17 lakh) and Maharashtra (about 12.7 lakh). In total, there were 1,53,09,355 stray dogs in India.

Chart 2 shows the State-wise number of dog bite cases recorded between 2019 and 2022. Uttar Pradesh recorded 27.5 lakh bites, followed by Tamil Nadu (21.4 lakh) and Maharashtra (16.9 lakh). In total, there were 1,55,29,012 recorded cases of dog bites in India.

Chart 3 shows the State-wise number of human deaths due to rabies registered between 2016 and 2020, according to the National Health Profile (NHP). West Bengal registered 194 such deaths in the period followed by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh with 86 and 41 deaths, respectively. However, data on rabies cases and deaths are unreliable as the numbers vary wildly depending on the sources referred to. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2020, there were 268 rabies deaths in India, but according to the NHP, there were only 55 deaths that year. While there were two rabies deaths in 2019 in Kerala according to the NHP, the State's Health Department recorded eight deaths.

With the WHO estimating that 99% of human rabies cases are transmitted by the bite of infected dogs, the National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination From India has proposed strategic mass dog vaccination as a way forward. If 70% of the dogs are vaccinated, and the effort is sustained for three years, rabies can be eliminated, says the document. The WHO agrees that this is a cost-effective way of tackling the issue.

The results of a data-driven rabies elimination programme in Goa, published in the *Nature* journal in May 2022, showed that vaccinating 70% of the dogs in the State helped eliminate human rabies cases and led to a 92% reduction in monthly canine rabies cases **(Chart 4).**

While the focus should be on vaccinating dogs for rabies, it is to be noted that all the four children who died this year succumbed to bite injuries and were not rabies victims.

Not just a stray case

The charts are based on data collated from the National Health Profile, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha replies, the 2019 Livestock Census and the *Nature* journal

Chart 1 | The State-wise number of stray dogs, according to the 2019 Livestock Census

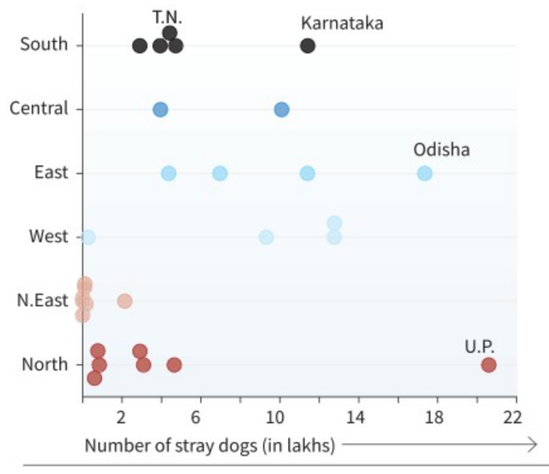


Chart 2 | The State-wise number of dog bite cases recorded between 2019 and 2022

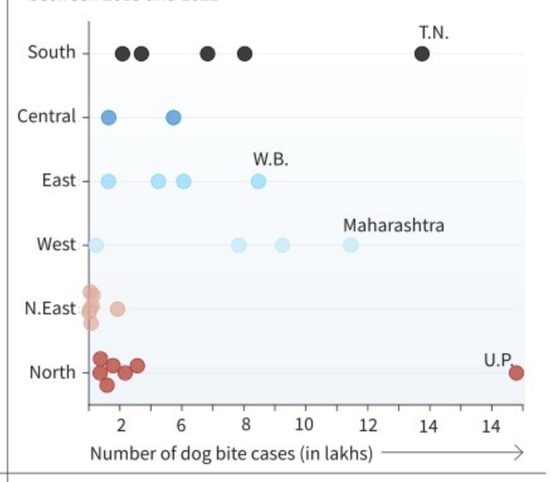


Chart 3 | The State-wise number of human deaths due to rabies registered between 2016 and 2020

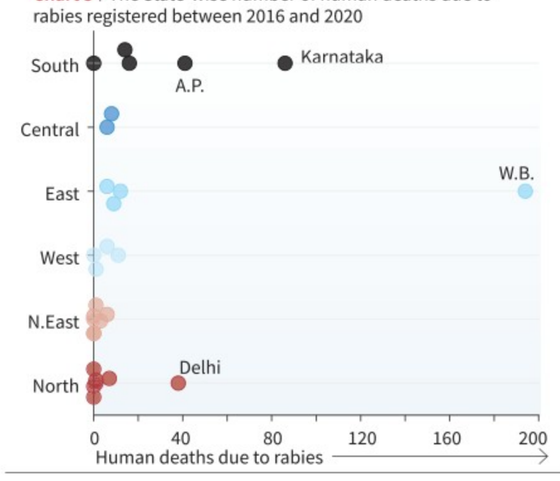
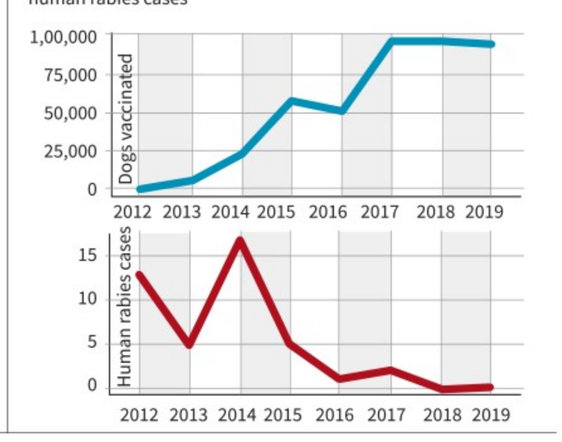


Chart 4 | Results from a data-driven rabies elimination programme in Goa shows that vaccinating dogs helps reduce human rabies cases



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 4, 1973

Heavy U.S. bombing in Cambodia

Saigon, April 3: American warplanes, including every available B-52 heavy bomber and F-111 fighter bomber in Southeast Asia, launched their heaviest raids of the war in Cambodia overnight in apparent efforts to force the communists into a peace settlement, reliable sources reported to-day.

The sources said the bombing was widespread and appeared to go beyond simple tactical support for ground forces. They compared it to the aerial campaign against Hanoi and Haiphong last December which was aimed at forcing North Vietnam into a peace settlement.

Military sources said some of the giant bombers, along with fighter bombers, flew in support of Cambodian Government troops on an offensive in the Kirirom plateau, southwest of Phnom Penh.

Communist mortar batteries to-day shelled the isolated provincial capital of Takeo in Southern Cambodia killing or wounding 10 civilians, the military command in Phnom Penh reported.

The command spokesman confirmed that the district town of Chambank, 39 kilometres south of Phnom Penh, was evacuated by Government forces yesterday. About 50 Government paratroops were trapped inside the town when it fell.

In Washington the State Department justified American military support to Cambodia on the ground that the Phnom Penh regime was an "ally in the sense it has been fighting a common enemy for the past three years.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 4, 1923

In Scotland

London, April 2: The fishermen of Aberdeen, who have been on strike for the past five weeks as a protest against German trawlers landing fish from Iceland, are now resorting to violence. Three thousand strikers this morning invaded the fish market and pelted the crews of three German vessels with lumps of ice and fish. They dumped the fish from a German vessel on the harbour and set German trawlers adrift, three of which were subsequently berthed in a remote point of the harbour. Other vessels steamed off to Germany. Police reinforcements rushed up and quelled the disturbance.

From Page One

Surat court grants bail to Rahul Gandhi

The complainant has been asked to file a reply by April 10.

Mr. Gandhi arrived at the Surat District and Sessions Court accompanied by his sister and Congress general secretary Priyanka, while top party leaders and thousands of workers gathered outside with banners in a show of solidarity.

Noida man prime suspect in Kerala attack

The police have not revealed if they have custody of the suspect yet.

"The suspect appears to have no apparent political sympathies if the person's social media posts are considered," a senior official said. They have not ruled out mental issues.

The police have recovered from the train tracks, a bag containing a bottle of petrol, reading glasses, a mobile phone, a lunch box, and a notebook with English and Hindi scribbles. They prepared a facial composite based on eyewitness accounts. The image was broadcast on television channels.

State Police Chief Anil Kant said the police had leads on the suspected arsonist and the probe would cover the conspiracy angle if any emerged. He announced an 18-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) under M.R. Ajith Kumar, ADGP, Law and Order. Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan said he was shocked by the "brutal killing of three persons and inflicting of burn injury to other train passengers".

(With inputs from Kozhikode Bureau)

Net direct tax kitty up 17.6%, a tad over target

At a gross level, the share of personal income tax and STT to the tax kitty has touched 48.9% in 2022-23 compared to around 47.4% in 2021-22, while corporate tax accounted for just 51.1% in the year gone by as opposed to 52.6% in 2021-22.

Moreover, the growth in corporate tax collections was also lower than revenues collected from personal income taxpayers, combined with STT inflows. The gross corporate tax kitty had risen 16.9% in the year, while personal income tax and STT yielded a growth of 24.2%. The Ministry said gross tax collections grew 20.33% to ₹19.68 lakh crore in 2022-23, compared to ₹16.36 lakh crore in the previous financial year. Tax refunds jumped at a sharper 37.4% year-on-year to a little over ₹3.07 lakh crore from ₹2,23,658 crore in 2021-22.

The Ministry's data on gross corporate and personal tax collections along with STT, however, put 2021-22 collections from these taxes at ₹16.32 lakh crore and the 2022-23 kitty at about ₹19.65 lakh crore, signalling a higher 20.4% growth.

"The Budget Estimates [BE] for direct tax revenue in the Union Budget for FY 2022-23 were fixed at ₹14.20 lakh crore which were revised and the Revised Estimates [RE] were fixed at ₹16.50 lakh crore. The provisional direct tax collections have exceeded the BE by 16.97% and RE by 0.69%," the Finance Ministry said.

China to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh

In 2017, the MCA put out a similar list of six places, and in December 2021, released a list of 15 places that it sought to rename.

The notification (No. 548) said that "according to the relevant provisions of the State Council on the management of geographical names, [China's Ministry of Civil Affairs], together with relevant departments, has standardised some geographical names in southern Tibet. The third batch of supplementary place names for public use in southern Tibet (11 in total) is now officially announced".

The 11 places named are five mountain peaks, two populated areas, two land areas and two rivers. The claimed geographical area has always been controlled and administered by India.

An appended list released by China included names in Mandarin, Tibetan and Pinyin (English transliteration) of the 11 places along with exact latitude and longitude coordinates. A map, also part of the announcement, shows much of Arunachal Pradesh marked as Zangnan, in the south of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, which China calls Xizang.

"Arunachal Pradesh has always been, and will always be an integral part of India. Assigning invented names to places in Arunachal Pradesh does not alter this fact," spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said in 2021. In 2017 and 2021, the Chinese Foreign Ministry had stated that China's territorial claims in the so-called "Zangnan region" had a "historical and administrative basis".

Sources in the security establishment termed the renaming of disputed locations "an attempt to bolster Chinese territorial claims and to create or alter evidence to support their claims in case of any sovereignty disagreements in any international court". Another source said the repeated renaming would have "no bearing" on the ground situation. Sources also pointed that apart from Arunachal Pradesh, Beijing has done exactly the same in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Gurdwara in U.P. comes under lens in Amritpal case

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

A gurdwara in Pilibhit district of Uttar Pradesh has come under the lens of security agencies and the Punjab Police who are investigating the case related to fugitive extremist and Waris Punjab De leader Amritpal Singh.

The *karsevak* (volunteer) of the Mohanapur gurdwara in Pilibhit, Joga Singh, had been arrested in Ludhiana in connection with the case after an abandoned vehicle with an Uttarakhand number plate and registered in the name of chief Jathedar of Badhpura gurdwara in Pilibhit, Mohan Singh, was found on March 28.

Following this, when the police and other agencies went to the Pilibhit gurdwara to check the CCTV footage of the premises, it was found that the footage for the evening of March 25 was missing, while the recording since the next day was available. In the footage of March 26, it was found that the suspicious vehicle was parked inside the gurdwara compound.

Pilibhit, which shares an open border with Nepal, could have helped the absconding Amritpal Singh to sneak into the Himalayan Kingdom.

Only govt. can take call on plea on disqualified lawmakers, EC tells SC

Poll body maintains distance on the question whether a disqualified lawmaker should be banned from contesting elections for five years

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission in the Supreme Court has chosen to maintain a distance on the question whether a disqualified lawmaker should be banned from contesting elections for five years.

The commission said it would be "appropriate" to have the Union government deal with the issue. The commission filed a five-page affidavit in the top court in response to a plea by Congress leader Jaya Thakur.

The petitioner contended that an MP or an MLA who has either been disqualified from the House under the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law) or under Article 191(1)(e) of the Constitution should be barred from contesting elections for five years.

Article 191(1)(e) gives the various grounds of disqualification "for being chosen as, and for being a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State".

They include holding an office of profit, being of unsound mind or undischarged solvent or being a non-citizen or voluntarily acquiring the citizenship of a foreign state or being under any acknowledgement of allegiance or adherence to a foreign state.

The final ground of disqualification is if an MLA or an MLC is "disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament".

The final ground of disqualification, and the one highlighted by Ms. Thakur in her petition, is if an MLA or an MLC is "disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament".

"The issue involved in this matter pertains to the interpretation of Article 191 (1)(e) of the Constitution. It relates to matters that do not have a nexus with the conduct of elections in terms of the remit of the Commission under Article 324. Therefore, respondent no. 1 (Union government) is the appropriate party for the adjudication of the prayers made in the petition," the commission said in the affidavit.

The EC is vested with the authority of superintendence, direction, and control of elections for the conduct of elections to Parliament, State legislatures and the offices of the President and the Vice-President.

Ms. Thakur has highlighted instances in the past when lawmakers resign from legislature parties which brought them to the House, leading to a fall of the government.

The package contained three pistols, six magazines, 48 bullets and four hand grenades. PTI

J&K Police recover arms suspected to be dropped by drone

The Hindu Bureau
SAMBA

A consignment of arms and ammunition, suspected to have been dropped using a drone, was recovered in Rakh Barutia village of Vijaypur in Samba district, the J&K Police said on Monday.

The package, found early on Monday near the railway line in Rakh Barotiya, contained three Chinese-made pistols and grenades, officials said. "Three pistols, six magazines, 48 bullets and four hand grenades have been recovered from a packet," they said.

"A yellow coloured packet was found lying near bushes," officials added.

"The packet has a long plastic string, which suggests it was dropped via a drone," Surinder Chowdhury, Additional Superintendent of Police, Samba, said.

He added that the police were investigating the matter.

Mr. Choudhary said, "We received information about a suspected package (lying) in the fields of Rakh Barotiya in the Vijaypur belt. We immediately rushed the police, bomb disposal squad and FSL (Forensic Science Laboratory) teams to the spot."

"It was first ascertained if the package contained an IED (Improvised Explosive Device)," the officer added.

Based on the past *modus operandi*, the police suspect that the package was dropped by a drone which came from across the border.

(With inputs from PTI)

'Just 9.3% of loans under PM SVANidhi given to vendors from minority communities'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A total of 42.7 lakh loans amounting to ₹5,152.37 crore has been disbursed to street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme, out of which only 3.98 lakh, or 9.3%, were to hawkers from the minority communities, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs told the Rajya Sabha.

The PM SVANidhi is a micro-credit scheme which was launched in 2020 to provide handholding support to street vendors to tide over the pandemic-induced economic stress. It facilitates collateral-free loans of ₹10,000, with subsequent loans of ₹20,000 and ₹50,000 with 7% interest subsidy.

The data shared by the Ministry in reply to a question by John Brittas, MP, on Monday shows that there was a decline in the share of loans to street vendors of minority communities with 10.23% in 2020-21, 9.25% in 2021-22 and an all-time low of 7.76% in 2022-23.

A total of 42.7 lakh loans amounting to ₹5,152.37 crore had been disbursed to vendors.

In 2020-21, 2,10,457 loans were disbursed to minorities, while it was 98,973 loans in 2021-22 and 88,609 in 2022-23.

"The data pertaining to the loans given under PM SVANidhi draws a bleak picture for minority street vendors," said Dr. Brittas.

"Albeit the minorities constitute around 20% of the total population of the country, their representation amongst street vendors is reported to be manifold owing to myriad socio-economic reasons," he added.

According to the data, the State-wise disbursal of loans seemed to be aligned with its population, with Uttar Pradesh disbursing the maximum number of loans at 11,22,397, while Sikkim gave out one loan. Uttar Pradesh also gave the largest number of loans – 95,032 – to hawkers from minority communities.

India-U.S. air exercise to begin next week, Japan to be observer

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Continuing the military-to-military engagement, the Air Forces of India and the U.S. are set to conduct the Cope India exercise from April 10 to 21 at the Kalaikunda airbase in West Bengal, with Japan as an observer.

The exercise will see intense air manoeuvres aimed at improving interoperability, a defence source said.

Frontline fighters

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to field its frontline fighters SU-30MKI, Rafale and the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft along with force multipliers, while the U.S. Air Force is expected to bring in F-15 fighter jets.

The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) participated in Cope India as an observer for the first time in December 2018 based on the Agreement of Defence Ministerial Meeting on August 20, 2018.

Trilateral exercise

As was reported by *The Hindu* then, the U.S. proposed a trilateral air exercise between the three countries and so Japan was included as an observer with the intention to elevate it into trilateral level in phases.

The India-U.S. bilateral Malabar naval exercise became trilateral with the addition of Japan in 2015 and further brought in all the Quad partners together with the inclusion of Australia in 2020.

In January this year, India and Japan held the maiden air exercise Veer Guardian hosted by the JASDF.

PM receives appreciation letters for Kashi Tamil Sangamam

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Months after the conclusion of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam, a month-long programme organised in Varanasi in November 2022, hundreds of letters of appreciation from participants to Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been received and are still being delivered.

According to government sources, efforts have been made by Mr. Modi to respond to each.

"Kashi has had a long and enduring connection with the people of Tamil Nadu, who have added to the rich tapestry of culture and civilisation of the place. Kashi Tamil Sangamam has rekindled those historic memories and reiterated how deeply connected the various regions of our country are," Mr. Modi wrote to one correspondent.

In his responses to the various letters, the Prime Minister emphasised that in the 75th year of Independence, termed *Amrit Kaal*, efforts to build a developed India need to be strengthened.

The Kashi Tamil Sangamam was organised by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Uttar Pradesh with support from Central universities such as the IIT-Madras and the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Students and scholars from Kashi and Tamil Nadu participated in the programme which explored commonality in culture and connections between the two regions.

In his speech inaugurating the programme, Mr. Modi underlined that Kashi and Tamil Nadu were "timeless centres of our culture and civilisation".

He said that both Sanskrit and Tamil were two of the most ancient languages that exist.

Akhilesh Yadav unveils Kanshi Ram statue in Rae Bareli

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Monday unveiled a statue of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) founder and Dalit leader Kanshi Ram at Manyavar Kanshi Ram Mahavidyalaya in Rae Bareli.

Speaking at the function organised by the SP general secretary and prominent non-Yadav OBC (Other Backward Class) face Swami Prasad Maurya, Mr. Yadav reached out to the Dalit community. He said that the path shown by socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia is the same as that imagined by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram for the uplift of depressed sections.

Appearing to counter allegations levelled by BSP president Mayawati, who said that the SP is "attempting to manipulate" the Dalit community, Mr. Yadav said, "We aim at binding the Bahujan society and are not trying to create division."

Remembering the friendship between Kanshi Ram and his father and SP founder Mulayam Singh, Mr. Yadav said both leaders "together pioneered a new kind of politics in the country".

"Netaji [Mulayam] helped Kanshi Ramji reach Parliament by supporting him from Etawah in Lok Sabha elections. Today in the same way, our society needs to be united," he said.

Farmers to rally against Centre tomorrow; actors, journalists pledge support

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As thousands of farmers and agriculture and industrial workers started travelling to New Delhi for a rally on Wednesday on the call of the All India Agriculture Workers Union (AIAWU), the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), and around 300 academics, actors, writers, journalists and defence veterans pledged their support to the protest.

They said the government was "blindly pushing ahead with its discredited policy of providing gifts to the corporates by cutting corporate taxes, selling off public sector assets at throwaway prices, dismantling protective labour laws, writing off huge corporate loans, and inviting predatory foreign capital into the country's key and strategic industries hitherto reserved for the public sector".

Around 300 academics, writers, and defence veterans pledged their support to the protest.

One of the organisers of the rally and eminent economist Prabhat Patnaik told *The Hindu* that the rally was the coming together of agriculture labourers, industrial workers as well as peasants. "These three are fundamental, basic classes of our society. Therefore, their coming together itself is a matter of historic significance. These three classes are the most oppressed classes and they are coming together on their material demands and it will be overturning the discourse the Hindutva forces have been placing on them," Prof. Patnaik said.

No lack of political will against corruption: Modi

The CBI, the Prime Minister asserted, has given faith to people through its work and techniques; he asks agency to adopt best international practices and equip officials to speed up investigation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday exhorted the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials to take action against the corrupt, however powerful, without any hesitation, stating that today there was no dearth of political will in fighting the menace.

He said that while India's economic power was growing, the attempts to create obstacles were also increasing. He cautioned that going ahead, the attacks on the country's social fabric, its unity and brotherhood, its economic interests and institutions would also increase. "Corruption money will be spent on this," he said.

After inaugurating the CBI's diamond jubilee celebrations, the Prime Minister said: "These people will keep distracting you, but you have to focus on your work. No corrupt person should be spared. There should be no laxity in our efforts. This is the wish of the country, this is the wish of the countrymen. The country, law and Constitution are with you."

A united fight: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a memento by CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Best practices

Mr. Modi told the agency that best international practices should be adopted and the officials well equipped to speed up the process of investigation and punishment of the culprits.

He stressed the need to eliminate silos between different agencies, study the multinational nature of crime and corruption, and expand the use of forensic science in investigations.

The Prime Minister suggested that the agency could rope in tech-enabled entrepreneurs, youngsters and tech-savvy young officers to probe cybercrimes.

Mr. Modi said through its work and skills, the CBI had instilled trust among the citizens. "It is like a brand for truth and justice," he said, adding that it is an extraordinary feat. He said the agency's proposed *"Chintan Shivir"* should help learn from the past and plan for the future.

The Prime Minister said the CBI's chief responsibility was to rid the country of corruption, an offence that snatched the rights of the poor and bred many other crimes.

Centre's actions

After 2014, he said, the Centre started taking action against black money and *benami* assets in a mission mode. The reasons behind corruption were targeted. Procurement was one such area, for which the Government eMarketplace portal was launched to bring in transparency.

He said the Centre introduced the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, which had so far enabled the confiscation of assets worth ₹20,000 crore belonging to the offenders who fled the country. Owing to the Direct Benefit Transfers, over 8 crore fake beneficiaries were taken off the list and about ₹2.25 lakh crore was saved. Interviews were abolished in the Group C and Group D services.

At the event, Mr. Modi conferred medals on the recipients of the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and Gold Medal for Best Investigating Officers of the CBI.

EWS quota is 'economic justice', could never be 'social justice', says Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Bringing together leaders of different political parties on a virtual platform on Monday, DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin strongly opposed the 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among the Open Competition category. He declared that it amounted to "economic justice" and could never be "social justice".

Presiding over the first All India Federation for Social Justice virtually, Mr. Stalin accused the BJP government at the Centre of "cunningly" including economic backwardness along with social and educational backwardness. "Economic status is not a permanent yardstick. A person poor today may be rich tomorrow and vice versa. A few can conceal the fact that they had money. Hence it is not right to have this criterion for reservation," he said.

Making it clear that he was not against extending financial help to the poor and needy, he wondered if something was for the poor, should it not be for poor among all castes? "Why the exception for forward castes? Is it not an injustice to push the poor oppressed caste people out of the EWS ambit? This is the reason we oppose EWS," he pointed out.

> Why the exception for forward castes? Is it not an injustice to push the poor oppressed caste people out of the EWS ambit? This is the reason we oppose EWS
>
> **M.K. STALIN**
> Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

Mr. Stalin said it was the ploy of the BJP government to give 10% reservation for the forward castes under EWS. "Those who said reservation is against merit are supporting reservation for the EWS. What is their logic to support a 10% reservation for the EWS then? Is it not against merit?" he asked.

Caste-based census

Mr. Stalin further urged the Union government to conduct a caste-based census.

CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury said unfortunately social justice had often been understood as merely limited to the reservation and they were not sufficient. "To make it sufficient, reservation must be accompanied by economic empowerment," Mr. Yechury said.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Veerappa Moily made a strong case for a caste census, saying social justice required concrete data to move forward. CPI leader D. Raja also supported a caste census.

Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister of Rajasthan; Hemant Soren, Chief Minister of Jharkhand; and Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, were among those who participated in the meeting along with representatives of the AAP, the Trinamool Congress and other parties.

Centre flayed for delay in survey to assess poverty

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Planning Rao Inderjit Singh on Monday said in the Rajya Sabha that the last time the Centre made an estimate of the poverty line and poverty ratio was in 2013, based on the large sample surveys on Household Consumer Expenditure carried out by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in 2011-12.

The Opposition questioned this and said the Centre's latest statistics on poverty was at least nine years old. The answer was given in reply to a question raised by Communist Party of India MP P. Sandosh Kumar. He said the data exposed the reality of all tall claims by the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "More than a decade has passed since the last survey, the Centre does not have an estimation of the situation of the poor people of the country. This explains the complete lack of direction in Modi government's approach towards problems of the country," he said.

According to the survey, the number of poor people in the country was 27 crore in 2011-12.

Unrest grips Bihar districts over violence during Ram Navami; 173 persons held

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Communal violence continued to create unrest in Nalanda and Rohtas districts of Bihar as another alleged blast occurred in Sasaram, the district headquarters of Rohtas, on Monday morning.

While the police claimed it to be the sound from firecrackers, people insisted there had been a bomb blast.

On the evening of April 1, five people were injured in a blast in the Sherganj locality of the town. Later, a similar incident took place in the Mochi Toli locality near a mosque. Bihar Director-General of Police (DGP) R.S. Bhatti inspected the affected areas in Bihar Sharif and visited the spot where a youth died in firing.

An unidentified body with severe wounds was found in the Bazaar Samiti locality on Monday evening, raising the casualties in Bihar Sharif to two.

According to the police, 130 persons have been arrested in Bihar Sharif and 43 in Sasaram in connection with the incidents.

Tension in the air: Security personnel stand guard outside a temple at Bihar Sharif in Nalanda district on Monday. PTI

Paramilitary forces have been deployed in the affected areas. In Bihar Sharif, Section 144 of the CrPc has been imposed. Internet services have also been suspended in Nalanda district till Tuesday.

'Under control'

Rohtas District Magistrate Dharmendra Kumar told *The Hindu* that the situation was under control in Sasaram and the police were camping in all the areas that were affected by communal violence.

He dismissed the claims of the alleged bomb blast on Monday and said the sound was from a firecracker.

Meanwhile, the Opposition BJP leaders accused the Nitish Kumar government of allowing communal tension in the State. "The government is doing politics of appeasement by allowing riots in the State. There was a peace committee meeting before *shobha yatra* during Ram Navami. Despite that, stones were thrown on the procession. The government is taking action against Hindus only," Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Vijay Kumar Sinha said.

Amid disruptions, Rajya Sabha passes Competition Bill

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Both Houses of Parliament witnessed disruptions on Monday, the first day of the last week of the Budget Session, over the Adani stock controversy and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's speech abroad criticising the political atmosphere in the country.

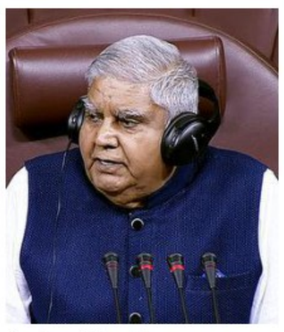
The Rajya Sabha passed the Competition (Amendment) Bill without any debate.

The Lok Sabha had passed the Bill, which regulates mergers and acquisitions, in a similar manner last week.

The Upper House was adjourned till 2 p.m. within three minutes of convening for the day amid persistent protest from the Opposition demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani-Hindenburg episode.

When the House met at 2 p.m., Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar congratulated the members on Rajya Sabha Day.

He then invited Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to move a motion to pass the Competition (Amendment) Bill.



Jagdeep Dhankhar

Obituary references

When proceedings in the Lok Sabha started at 11 a.m., the House did not witness any disruptions as Speaker Om Birla read out obituary references for sitting member from Pune constituency and BJP leader Girish Bapat and former Independent member Innocent, who represented the Chalakudy constituency in Kerala.

After paying homage, Mr. Birla adjourned the House till 2 p.m.

The Opposition protests resumed in the afternoon session, and the House was adjourned for the day after laying of papers.

As Rahul files appeal, Rijiju accuses Congress of trying to 'pressure' the judiciary

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of making a "childish attempt" to put pressure on the judiciary by taking a group of leaders and aides accompanying him is only a drama. What Rahul Gandhi is doing is also a childish attempt to bring pressure on the appellate court. All courts in the country are immune from such tactics," tweeted Mr. Rijiju.

Speaking to mediapersons outside the Parliament House, the Law Minister said, "This is not the first time when a politician has been convicted... My point is very simple, why the Congress party is trying to put this kind of undue pressure on the judiciary? There are means and ways to deal with judicial matters. But is this the way?"

Responding to this, Mr. Kharge told reporters, "This is not a show of strength. He [Mr. Gandhi] is our leader and our people are standing in solidarity with him. Even in a small case, family members join and go to court. Here, it is about an entire party and he [Mr. Gandhi] is fighting for the country".

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" STOP CORONA "Wear Face Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"
PRESS NIT No. 20/WB-I / 2022-23

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ Amount put to Tender	Earnest Money (EMD)	Tender Fee	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No.	Last Date / Time of receipt of tender E-Procurement Solution
1	Selection of Agency for **"Carrying out the Ground Water Flow Modelling and Other studies at Newly created Lakes of Delhi Jal Board and the Associated Tube wells works under ACE (P)-4"**	Rs. 59,50,000/-	Rs. 1,19,000/-	1000/-	31.03.2023 Tender Id 2023_ DJB_239214_1	24.04.2023 at 02:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in**.
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 01(2023-24)
Executive Engineer (WB)-I

Nitish has lost will to govern, says BJP on Bihar communal flare-up

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday questioned the competence of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as communal violence gripped the State, stating that Mr. Kumar "seems to have lost his will to govern" and should "stop dreaming about becoming Prime Minister and instead take care of the State".

Several leaders from the BJP spoke outside Parliament after communal violence broke out over Ram Navami processions in Sasaram and Bihar Sharif. While former Union Law Minister and Lok Sabha member from Patnasahib Ravi Shankar Prasad questioned Mr. Kumar's willingness to handle the situation, former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and Rajya Sabha member Sushil Kumar Modi said it was very convenient for leaders of the State's ruling alliance to blame the BJP and right-wing organisations for violence, wondering as to why the government had not exposed such a conspiracy.

"If it is a BJP conspiracy, then why did you not expose it? Lakhs of people who participated in Ram Navami processions across the State are not BJP members but belong to the Hindu society. They can be from any party. For the first time in his over 17-year tenure as CM, Nitish Kumar has been unable to control such a situation even after so many days," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Prasad said no incident had been reported last year as adequate security deployment was made.

Both leaders said violence was reported from places which are "known sensitive areas" but still preventive measures were not taken.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର
ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ

ଦ୍ୱାଦଶ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ୧୫୦୦୦ ମେଧାବୀ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ଲାପ୍‌ଟପ୍ କିଣିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା

୨୦୨୧-୨୨ ଶିକ୍ଷାବର୍ଷରେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ମାଧ୍ୟମିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପରିଷଦ (CHSE) ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିଚାଳିତ Annual Higher Secondary Examination, 2022, Vocational Education Examination, 2022 ଏବଂ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିଚାଳିତ ଉପଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପରୀକ୍ଷା, ୨୦୨୨ରେ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଥିବା ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିବେଚିତ ୧୫୦୦୦ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ବିଜୁ ଯୁବ ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ ଯୋଜନାରେ ଲାପ୍‌ଟପ୍ କିଣିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ୩୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ।

ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିବେଚିତ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଏକ ତାଲିକା ଏବଂ ନୂତନ ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶିକା ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗର ୱେବ୍‌ସାଇଟ୍ www.dhe.odisha.gov.in ଓ www.scholarship.odisha.gov.inରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ କରାଯାଇଅଛି। ଉକ୍ତ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ www.scholarship.odisha.gov.inରେ ନିଜର ଆଧାର ନମ୍ବର ଓ ଆଧାର ସହିତ ସଂଯୋଗ ହୋଇଥିବା ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ନମ୍ବର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ Registration କରି ନୂତନ, ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶିକା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ନିଜର ବିବରଣୀ ତା୦୫.୦୪.୨୦୨୩ରିଖ (ଆବେଦନର ଆରମ୍ଭ ତାରିଖ)ରୁ ତାଂ୧୫.୦୫.୨୦୨୩ରିଖ (ଆବେଦନର ଶେଷ ତାରିଖ) ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ।

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ଯୁଗ୍ମ ଶାସନ ସଚିବ

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भारत सरकार टकसाल, मुंबई
INDIA GOVERNMENT MINT, MUMBAI

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भारत प्रतिभूति मुद्रण तथा निर्माण निगम लिमिटेड की इकाई
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NOTICE

BOOKING OF "150th Birth Anniversary of Shri Ram Chandra Ji" Commemorative Coin Set.

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Theme	Proof (Rs.)	UNC (Rs.)
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The booking period will be from 04.04.2023 to 15.05.2023. The coin sets can be booked online on our website **igmmumbai.spmcil.com.** Alternately, the coin sets can be ordered offline by submitting an order form available on our website or by giving details on plain paper viz. Name and full address in capital letters, details of coin sets required along with the prescribed price as stated above.

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Dy. General Manager (Marketing)
For Chief General Manager

INBRIEF

Bhutan King arrives in New Delhi for three-day visit

Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck began his trip to India on Monday, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar receiving him at the airport in New Delhi. The King will hold talks with President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday. In the evening, Mr. Jaishankar called on the visiting dignitary. "Deeply privileged to call on His Majesty the King of Bhutan. His Majesty's vision for Bhutan's future and for strengthening the unique partnership with India is deeply appreciated," the External Affairs Minister tweeted. Officials said that no public events were expected during the three-day visit. PTI

Three booked for dangerous motorbike stunt in Mumbai

The Mumbai Police have booked a man and two women after a video of their dangerous motorbike stunt went viral on social media. The trio were arrested on April 2 by the Bandra Kurla Complex police. The 13-second video recording shows the man performing a wheelie with one woman sitting in front of him and another sitting pillion. None of them was wearing a helmet. They were charged under Sections 279 (rash driving) and 336 (endangering lives) of the Indian Penal Code as well as provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act. The women were also charged under Section 114 (abettor present when offence is committed) of the IPC.

Patra chawl case: ED attaches properties of HDIL promoters

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday attached two properties belonging to Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd. (HDIL) promoters Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan in connection with the Patra chawl redevelopment of 2018. The Central agency provisionally attached two immoveable properties worth ₹31.50 crore belonging to the Wadhawans, the directors of Guru Ashish Construction Private Limited. The directors had allegedly misled the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority and generated ₹1,039.79 crore through illegal activities, the ED said.

Ajit Pawar backs PM on qualifications controversy

Stating that it was pointless to rake up the issue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's academic qualifications to the exclusion of addressing pressing issues affecting the country, Maharashtra Leader of the Opposition and senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar said on Monday that the people of India did not vote for Mr. Modi on the basis of his degree but for his charisma. Mr. Pawar said it was ridiculous to question the validity of the academic degrees of someone who had been helming the country for nearly nine years. Mr. Pawar's remark was a sharp rebuke to his ally, the Shiv Sena (UBT), which demanded that Mr. Modi ought to come forward and inform the public about his academic qualifications.

Govt. has enough vaccine stock: Mandaviya

India reports a single-day jump of 3,641 fresh COVID-19 cases, a figure that is the highest this year so far; Health Minister says there is no need for alarm as the sub-variant of Omicron that is currently circulating in the country has not led to increased hospitalisation or severity of illness

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

There will be no revision in the COVID-19 vaccination policy for now, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Monday, while speaking about the current spike in cases that India is reporting. He said that India had enough vaccine stock, and the government was in no hurry to procure more.

"We have enough for those who want to avail of the vaccine in the government sector. Additionally, the private sector is also catering to those who want to get the vaccine dose," he said on the sidelines of a press conference. On Monday, India reported a single-day jump of 3,641 fresh COVID-19 cases (according to data released by the Health Ministry at 8 a.m.), a figure that is the highest this year so far. India currently has an active caseload of 20,219. The current daily positivity rate is at 6.12% which has almost doubled since the beginning of the month. The total tally of COVID-19 cases in the country since the onset of the pandemic is 4.47 crore.

The Minister said there was no need to be worried or alarmed as the sub-variant of Omicron that is currently circulating in the country had not increased hospitalisation or severity of illness.

Staying safe: There will be no change in India's vaccine policy, the Health Ministry has said. FILE PHOTO

"The cases are going up but we aren't worried as the severity and hospitalisation has not gone up. The Indian government is prepared and is monitoring the situation," the Minister said.

According to Union Health Ministry data updated at 8 a.m. on Monday, the total death toll has risen to 5,30,892 with 11 fatalities – three from Maharashtra and one each in Delhi, Kerala, Karnataka, and Rajasthan – recorded in a 24-hour span. The toll includes four deaths reconciled by Kerala.

Virus still evolving

The World Health Organization (WHO) said that SARS-CoV-2 continues to evolve, and based on the comparisons of antigenic cross reactivity using animal sera, replication studies in experimental models of the human respiratory tract, and evidence from clinical and epidemiological studies in humans, there is consensus among experts in the WHO's Technical Advisory Group on SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution (TAG-VE) that compared with previous variants, Omicron represents the most divergent variant of concern (VOC) seen to date.

"Since its emergence, Omicron variants have continued to evolve genetically and antigenically with an expanding range of sub-lineages, which so far have all been characterised by properties of evasion of existing population immunity and a preference to infect the upper respiratory tract (versus lower respiratory tract), as compared to pre-Omicron VOCs," it added.

Narayan Rane discharged in objectionable remarks case

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

BJP leader Narayan Rane's "controversial and politically insensitive" statement is not expected from a person who holds the post of Union Minister, the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Raigad-Alibag said on Monday while discharging him in a case filed for allegedly making objectionable remarks against former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

The case, filed for allegedly promoting enmity between groups on grounds of religion, race and so on, dates back to August 23, 2021, when Mr. Rane, addressing the Jan Ashirvad Yatra of the BJP, made certain statements against Mr. Thackeray.

Price of 651 essential drugs down by 6.73% from April 1, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The price of 651 essential drugs has come down by 6.73% on average from April 1, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Monday.

He said the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) had been able to fix the ceiling prices of 651 medicines so far out of the over 870 scheduled drugs listed under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).

Because of the capping of ceiling prices, the cost of 651 essential drugs on an average had already come down by 16.62%, the Minister said. Even if the prices were to go up by 12.12% this year, the capping would help to offset the hike, according to the Minister.

In November 2022, the government revised the list of essential medicines.

The Health Minister, in a series of counter-tweets to what he called was an "answer to president of the Indian National Congress Mallikarjun Kharge on his misleading tweet about Essential Medicine Price Rise", said: "A company can increase the price of medicines with effect from April 1, 2023, to the extent of 12.12% of the valid ceiling price of 651 essential medicines linked to Wholesale Price Index (WPI). But even if the company were to increase the price in full, an average reduction of 6.73% is estimated."

The Minister added that according to the provision under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013, every year, pharma companies could increase or decrease the prices of medicines according to the WPI.

But in November 2022, the government revised the list and prices of essential medicines. Under DPCO, 2013, the work of revising the applicable ceiling price of such notified drugs had been initiated by the NPPA. "So far, new ceiling prices of 651 out of 870 essential medicines have been notified. Due to which the approved ceiling price of medicines has decreased by an average of 16.62%. As a result, consumers will save an estimated ₹3,500 crore annually," the Minister said.

He also tweeted that the Janaushadhi campaign had created competition in the market, as a result of which pharma companies did not increase the price to the extent allowed.

The World Health Organization, in its note on Essential Medicines in Southeast Asia, said that an estimated 40% of health budgets in low- and middle-income countries were spent on medicines, with much of the cost borne out-of-pocket by patients. "Widespread health system inefficiencies mean that up to a quarter of spending on medicines is wasted due to poor procurement and irrational use, substandard and expired medicines," it said.

Dial-up Internet is now history in India: TRAI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The last dial-up Internet connection was switched off in India in March 2021, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has said, as it moved to repeal a decades-old regulation dictating the quality of service of the early Web access technology.

"These regulations were issued when the dial-up service was the only service available for accessing low-speed Internet," TRAI said in a draft released on April 3, referring to the 2001 regulation.

"With the passage of ... time, the telecommunication networks both wireline as well as wireless have evolved to offer high-speed broadband service on xDSL, FTTH, LTE, etc.," the regulator said in an explanatory note, referring to technologies used by telecom and broadband providers to deliver their services.

"Only BSNL was reporting the dial-up subscribers until March 2021 and afterwards BSNL was also not reporting any dial-up subscribers," TRAI said in its note, adding that BSNL had sent the regulator a certificate confirming that it no longer had any dial-up users in India.

Dial-up Internet speeds were theoretically capable of reaching a maximum speed of 56 kilobits per second.

CDC flags concern on eye-drops from India

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

U.S. agency worried that bacteria strain linked to opthalmic lubricant may spread

The national public health agency of the United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has expressed concern that a drug-resistant bacteria strain allegedly linked to eye-drops from India could gain a foothold in U.S. healthcare settings.

The alarm was raised even as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) said that the manufacturer of the EzriCare eye-drops – Global Pharma Healthcare – is recalling 50,000 tubes from the U.S. market following reports of contamination.

The eye-drops were manufactured by the Chennai-based Global Pharma Healthcare and distributed in the U.S. market by the EzriCare and Delsam Pharma, the U.S. FDA said.

The Health Ministry here did not comment on the contamination and recall, but speaking about the Central government's recent crackdown on drug manufacturers in India, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that his Ministry had initiated strict action against those manufacturing adulterated and spurious medicines.

Health warning

The CDC has cautioned that patients should stop using the eye-drops pending additional information and guidance from the CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

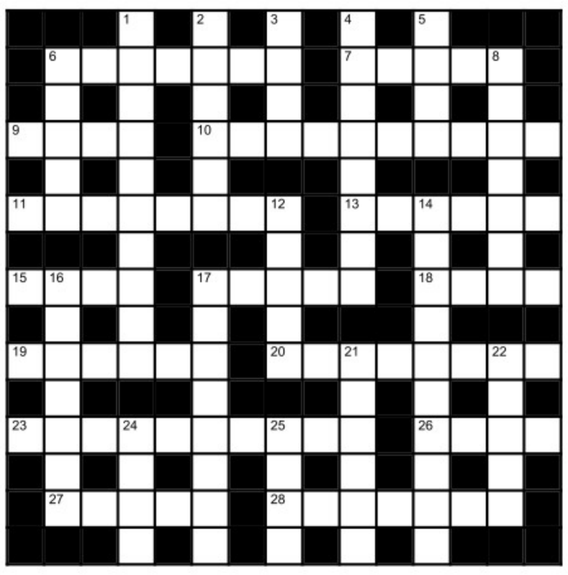
"If patients were advised to use EzriCare or Delsam Pharma's Artificial Tears by their healthcare provider, they should follow up with their healthcare provider for recommendations about alternative treatment options. Patients who have used EzriCare or Delsam Pharma's artificial tears and who have signs or symptoms of an eye infection should seek medical care immediately," it said.

TH CROSSWORD + 13830

(set by WrdPlougher)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

6 Warming up, losing weight finally for finale of world title (7)
7 A brief concern about sharp weapon (5)
9 Pretentious section of partygoers (4)
10 Certain vitamin tablets essentially chewed (costing money) to get energy (10)
11 "Colourful agent, eccentric heartless spy (duet extremely loud)... (8)
13 ... perhaps, Arjuna in Virata's kingdom — climax of movie much fun (excluding leads) — the latter coming first" (6)
15 Big vehicle, in short, first model in reversing fuel... (4)
17 ... emissions finally, even without margins, to zero (5)
18 Metamorphosing time for tiny insect (4)
19 Oral spelling correct – (6)
20 Time for a cuppa? Thirstily attack a beer brewed along with a drop of tequila (3,5)
23 Sewer rats' messes all over the place (10)
26 Idiot waterbird (4)
27 Stirred cha in extremely fancy goblet vessel used for parties (5)
28 Confirmed bachelor kicked out of Pennsylvanian college (7)

Down

1 Milkmaids' apron? (5,5)
2 Setting grids regularly, still essentially accepted by Maine university (6)
3 Shrek, say — abominable lower-class rogue (4)
4 Clear sail, going around fine at sea (8)
5 Fertilizer squeezed into manure agitator (4)
6 Scramble curry (hot, not cold) (5)
8 Perhaps it'd claw fierce young woman (7)
12 Effect of flute changing direction for the audience (5)
14 Decipher gloomy rune to reveal superstition you can count on? (10)
16 Irreverence of cheeky kid that is beginning to trouble you (7)
17 Importance of tips from consultant in mental health (8)
21 Like kind group (6)
22 Raise hand to regularly point (5)
24 Fake shock, completely taken aback in some measure (4)
25 Test match at Edgbaston — for starters, upset over team losing one (4)

SUDOKU

4				8	3			6
5					7		2	
	7							
2				9			5	
	8		3		5		1	
	1			4				7
							8	
	4		8					3
6			7	2				1

No.SS5758 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

		P	E	A	C	E	K	E	E	P	I	N	G	
C		L		B		X		A		O		A		S
H	O	U	R	S		P	A	R	A	M	E	D	I	C
E		S		E		E		N		P		I		O
R	E	F	I	N	E	D		E	G	O	T	R	I	P
I		O		C		I		D		M				E
S	T	U	D	E	N	T	S		O	S	C	A	R	
H		R				E		P				W		H
	A	S	C	O	T		A	L	O	E	V	E	R	A
O				U		W		A		L		S		R
R	I	C	O	T	T	A		T	I	G	H	T	E	N
G		A		P		R		O		R		R		E
A	N	C	H	O	R	M	A	N		E	T	U	I	S
N		H		S		T		I		C		C		S
	B	E	A	T	T	H	E	C	L	O	C	K		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	9	4	5	6	7	8	2	1
7	1	6	4	2	8	9	5	3
5	2	8	9	1	3	4	6	7
8	3	9	6	7	2	5	1	4
4	5	2	3	9	1	6	7	8
6	7	1	8	4	5	2	3	9
2	6	7	1	8	9	3	4	5
1	8	3	2	5	4	7	9	6
9	4	5	7	3	6	1	8	2

FAITH

Mahavir's stress on Ahimsa

The core of Mahavir's teaching is Ahimsa. Ahimsa, in Jain scriptures is described as "Dhammo mangal mukittham," the most auspicious and supreme dharma. Mahavir's Ahimsa is so vast that not only is it a "reverence for life," but it simply is a reverence and breakdown of boundaries. While talking about Ahimsa, Mahavir emphasised that each individual connects with the universe, as "the sea in the drop" to develop this intense compassion. It is only when one realises "Ti manasi", that each being is me, that one starts to break their limitations to extend Ahimsa.

The realisation that every being has a soul 'just like mine', and the acceptance of the idea that "Sukha" or bliss is the desire of every being and that "Dukha" or sorrow is not desired by any being, 'just like me', this "Advaita Bhavna," the experience of non-duality, is the seed of Ahimsa.

Ahimsa, in action is the most rigorous, in thought and mind is the most difficult, and as the dharma of the soul is transcendental. Anekantavad is the ahimsa in thought and mind. One of the most significant contributions of Jainism, which is very relevant to the present is "Anekantavad," the theory of non-absolutism. It is our thoughts and believes which make us inclusive or exclusive.

Ahimsa is "Ariyavayanmey", the most sacred and purest principle of dharma, "Deva vitam namansanti", the dharma that compels even the gods of the heavens to bow down to its upholders, and "Danam setham abhaydayanam", the best gift and supreme compassion to the universe. On the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti let us all revel in reverence for the three A's of Mahavir.

Rushil Khajanchi

RAMALLAH

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians, down Hamas drone over Gaza

AFP

Israeli forces killed two Palestinian gunmen during a clash in the West Bank on Monday, militant factions and medics said, and shot down a drone over the Gaza Strip that the Islamist group Hamas claimed as part of its arsenal. Tensions have been high as Muslims mark the Ramzan month during a surge in violence. REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysian MPs vote to axe mandatory death penalty

REUTERS

Malaysia's Parliament passed a Bill on Monday to remove mandatory death sentences, with rights groups welcoming the vote as an "important step" that could have a knock-on effect elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Convictions for several offences previously came with automatic death penalties, giving judges no leeway. AFP

TEXAS

NASA names first woman, first Black astronauts for lunar mission

AP

NASA on Monday named the first woman and the first African American ever assigned as astronauts to a lunar mission. Christina Koch, an engineer, was named as a mission specialist for the Artemis II lunar fly-by. Victor Glover, a U.S. Navy aviator, will be the first Black astronaut to be sent on a lunar mission. REUTERS

WASHINGTON

Top Republican McCarthy to meet Taiwanese President in U.S.

AP

Republican U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy confirmed he would meet Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in California on Wednesday. Ms. Tsai is stopping over in the United States en route to Central America, where she has met the leaders of Guatemala and is visiting Belize before meeting with Mr. McCarthy. AFP

Finland turns to the right as it prepares to enter NATO

The centre-right National Coalition emerged as the single largest party with 20.8% of the vote; the populist Finns won 20.1%, while Prime Minister Marin's Social Democrats secured 19.9%

Associated Press
HELSINKI

Wafer-thin margin: Petteri Orpo of the National Coalition Party celebrates after the parliamentary results were announced. AP

Finnish voters have given a boost to conservative parties in a weekend election, depriving left-wing Prime Minister Sanna Marin of another term as the country prepares to make its historic entry into NATO on Tuesday.

Ms. Marin won popularity for her Cabinet's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and for her EU nation's strong support for Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion last year. But Sunday's election was largely fought over economic issues, with voters in the nation of 5.5 million people shifting their allegiances significantly to parties on the political right as they seek solutions to rising state debt, inflation and other economic problems.

The bloated debt will pose a challenge for the new government, particularly since NATO membership will require Finland to raise its defence spending.

Setback for the left

Finland is to join NATO on Tuesday after Turkey ratified its membership last week, lifting the last hurdle to membership for the Nordic nation that shares a long border with Russia.

The centre-right National Coalition Party, or NCP, won 20.8% of the vote, which is more than any other party and puts it in a position to try to form a government. The right-wing populist party The Finns won 20.1% and Ms. Marin's Social Democrats 19.9%.

Ms. Marin's defeat is the latest setback for the left amid a larger shift to conservative and nationalist parties across Europe in recent times. Sweden ousted its left-wing government in a rightward shift last year, followed by an election in Italy that resulted in the first far-right-led government since the end of Second World War. Meanwhile Spain's left-wing government is under pressure, with the right-wing Popular Party and far-right Vox party ahead as the country heads to a vote in December.

The winning party in Finland traditionally kicks off government formation talks, and National Coalition led by Petteri Orpo – a 53-year-old former Finance Minister – is expected to start negotiations next week with the goal of putting together a Cabinet enjoying a majority in the 200-seat Parliament, the Eduskunta.

Wagner claims 'legal' capture of Bakhmut

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia's Wagner paramilitary group on Monday claimed it had captured the city hall in Ukraine's eastern town of Bakhmut, giving it "legal" control, but Kyiv said its forces still held the town.

Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin posted a video on his Telegram channel showing him holding a Russian flag. "This is the Wagner private military company, these are the guys who took Bakhmut. In a legal sense, it's ours," Mr. Prigozhin said.

Ukrainian military leaders said after Mr. Prigozhin's video was released that enemy troops had tried to take control of the town, but their forces had "repelled more than 20 enemy attacks".

Russia's Army said it did not report progress in Bakhmut after the Wagner mercenary group claimed it had captured the city's administration building.

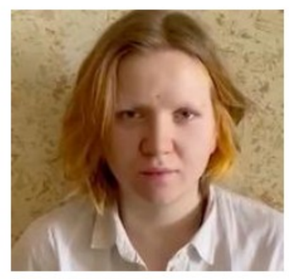
Russia blames Ukraine intelligence for bomb that killed military blogger

Associated Press

Russian authorities blamed Ukrainian intelligence agencies on Monday for orchestrating a bombing at a St. Petersburg cafe that killed a Russian military blogger who fervently supported Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and arrested a suspect accused of involvement in the attack.

Ukrainian authorities did not directly respond to the accusation, but President Volodymyr Zelensky said that he doesn't think about events in Russia and a senior official earlier described the bombing as part of Russia's internal turmoil.

Vladlen Tatarsky, 40, was killed on Sunday as he was leading a discussion at a cafe on the banks of the Neva River in the historic heart of Russia's second-largest city, officials said. Tatarsky, who had filed regular reports from the front lines in Ukraine, was the pen name for Maxim Fomin. He had accumulated more than 560,000 followers on his Telegram messaging app channel.



Darya Trepova

Over 30 people were wounded, and 10 of them remain in grave condition from the blast, according to the authorities.

Hidden bomb

Investigators have said they believe that the bomb was hidden in a bust of the blogger that was given to him just before the explosion. A video showed Tatarsky making jokes about the bust and putting it on the table next to him.

Russian authorities on Monday announced the arrest of Darya Trepova, a 26-year-old St. Petersburg resident who has been seen on video presenting Tatarsky with the bust. Last year, Ms. Trepova was detained by police for taking part in anti-war rallies.

The Interior Ministry released a brief video showing Ms. Trepova telling a police officer that she brought the statuette that exploded to the cafe.

According to Russian media reports, Ms. Trepova told investigators that she was asked to deliver the bust, but didn't know that it was hidden in it. The National Anti-Terrorist Committee, which coordinates counterterrorism operations, said the bombing was "planned by Ukrainian special services" and noted that Ms. Trepova was an "active supporter" of jailed Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Volodymyr Zelensky brushed off questions about the bombing on Monday.

Philippines allots 4 more military bases to U.S. troops

Agence France-Presse
MANILA

Military drills: U.S. and Philippine troops operate a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System in Nueva Ecija on March 31. GETTY IMAGES

The Philippines announced on Monday the location of four additional military bases to be used by U.S. troops, with one site near the South China Sea and another not far from Taiwan.

The longtime treaty allies agreed in February to expand cooperation in "strategic areas" of the Philippines as they seek to counter China's growing assertiveness over self-governed Taiwan and the building of Chinese bases in the South China Sea.

The 2014 Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement(EDCA) gave the U.S. access to five bases.

It was expanded to nine, but the locations of the four additional bases were withheld until Monday while the government consulted with local officials.

The four sites had been assessed by the Philippine military and deemed "suitable and mutually beneficial", the Presidential Communications Office said in a statement.

It said the bases would also be used for humanitarian and relief operations during disasters.

A U.S. official confirmed that the locations announced by the palace were the new EDCA sites.

Donald Trump leaves Florida for New York to face indictment

Associated Press
WEST PALM BEACH

Former President Donald Trump boarded his private jet on Monday and flew from Florida towards New York ahead of his expected booking and arraignment, as the nation's largest city bolstered security and warned potential agitators that it is "not a playground for your misplaced anger."

Mr. Trump's ground journey from his Mar-a-Lago club to his red, white and blue Boeing 757, emblazoned with "TRUMP" in gold letters was carried live on national television and took him past supporters waving banners and cheering the former President.

Donald Trump

The scene was quite different in New York. His return to the city opens an unprecedented chapter in American history, with Mr. Trump being the first former President to face criminal charges even as he is in the midst of a third campaign for the White House.

France to decide on legalising euthanasia

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

France could be the next European country to legalise euthanasia for the terminally ill after President Emmanuel Macron on Monday called for a law on a "French model on the end of life" within months.

The President tasked government with drafting a new law "by summer's end" after a public consultation showed openness to decriminalisation.

Mr. Macron's intervention marks a welcome change on an issue close to his heart, after facing months of protests over a massively controversial pension reform.

The committee of 184 French citizens – which had been tasked by the presidency with drawing up a non-binding recommendation – on Sunday approved legalising "active assistance to dying".

'Chinese spy balloon gathered intelligence on U.S. military sites'

Reuters

A Chinese balloon that flew across the United States was able to gather intelligence from several military sites, despite the Biden administration's efforts to prevent it from doing so, *NBC News* reported on Monday, citing two current senior U.S. officials and one former senior administration official.

The balloon, controlled by Beijing, was able to make multiple passes over some of the sites in February, at times flying in a figure-eight formation, NBC cited the officials as saying.

"The intelligence China collected was mostly from electronic signals, which can be picked up from weapons systems or include communications from base personnel, rather than images," NBC cited the officials as saying.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : (1)02/2023 -24 /KWA/ PHC/TVLA (Rt-2) (Id -318/2022) , (2) 03/2023 -24 /KWA/ PHC/TVLA ((Rt-4) (Id-1000/2022)) **(1)** KIIFB-Construction of 15 LL capacity OH Tank at Kuttoor, Laying clear water pumping main to Kuttoor tank and Distribution System, Approach road including road restoration works.,**(2)** NABARD-RIDF XXIV-WSS to Seethathode &Nilakkal ,Plappally - Construction of Sump cum Pump houses ,GLSRs & Providing Distribution system in Seethathodu Panchayath, supply, and erection of pumpsets, Road restoration works. **EMD:** Rs. 200000, 500000, **Tender fee :** Rs. 13010,19518, **Last Date for submitting Tender:** 04-05-2023 02:00:pm, **Phone :** 04692600162
Website : **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**
Superintending Engineer,
KWA-JB-GL-6-4-2023-24 **PH Circle,** Pathanamthitta

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)
WBSETCL
Registered Office: Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700 091
CIN: U40101WB2007SGC113474 • web: www.wbsetcl.in
NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/BPI/23-24/01 Date: 04.04.2023
The **Chief Engineer (Procurement)** invites e-Tender for procurement of 132 kV & 33 kV Bus Post Insulators. Interested bidders may obtain bidding documents by registering themselves on the e-tendering portal (**https://wbtenders.gov.in**). Bid documents can be downloaded from **04.04.2023, 11:00 A.M.** and shall be submitted (online) up to **04:00 P.M., 02.05.2023**. Visit the Company's website **www.wbsetcl.in** for details. ICA- T7079(3)/2022

DELHI JAL BOARD, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER (M)-XI, ROOM NO. 110, OLD SHIV MANDIR MARG, JAL SADAN,LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110024 Email:- eetdjbm11@gmail.com Ph-011-29810956
STOP CORONA "Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene
NIT No. 88/ EE (T) M-XI/ 2022-23

S. No	Name of work	Amount put to tender (in Rs.)	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Upgradation of peripheral sewerage system through desilting of sewer lines in Tughlakabad Institutional area and Sangam vihar-C (Ward No. 169) Sangam vihar Constituency (AC-49) under EE (M)-49.	item rate	61,700/-	2023_DJB_239109_1 29.03.2023	12.04.2023 upto 2:00 PM
2	Upgradation of peripheral sewerage system through desilting of sewer lines in Tughlakabad Extn. (Ward No. 170) Sangam vihar Constituency (AC-49) under EE (M)-49.	Item rate	58,700/-	2023_DJB_239109_2 29.03.2023	12.04.2023 upto 2:00 PM

NIT along with all the terms & conditions is available on Web Site **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in.**
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) **(Naresh Kumar Kardam)**
Advt. No. J.S.V. 04(2023-24) **Executive Engineer (T) M-XI**

Arctic scientists race to preserve 'ice memory'

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The eight specialists have set up camp at Holtedahlfonna ice field and plan to start drilling on Tuesday. AFP

Arctic scientists are set to start drilling to save samples of ancient ice for analysis before the frozen layers melt away due to climate change, mission organisers said on Monday.

Italian, French and Norwegian researchers have set up camp in Norway's Svalbard archipelago in what they called a race against time to preserve crucial ice records for analysing past environmental conditions. They will extract ice in a series of tubes from 125 metres below the surface, containing frozen geochemical traces dating back three centuries.

Analysis of chemicals in deep "ice cores" provides scientists with valuable data about past environmental conditions. But experts warn that water from melting ice is leaking down and altering the geochemical records preserved in ancient ice beneath.

Ice scientists "are seeing their primary material disappear forever from the surface of the planet", Jerome Chapellaz, president of the Ice Memory foundation running the operation, said.

Carbon emissions

Human-caused carbon emissions have warmed the planet by 1.1 degrees Celsius since the 19th century. Studies indicate that the Arctic is warming between two and four times faster than the global average. One set of ice tubes will be used for immediate analysis while a second set will be sent to Antarctica for storage in an "ice memory sanctuary" under the snow, where the samples will be preserved for future generations.

The eight specialists have set up camp at an altitude of 1,100 metres on the crevasse-ridden Holtedahlfonna ice field and plan to start drilling on Tuesday, Ice Memory said.

They will work for three weeks in temperatures as low as minus 25C (-13 Farenheit), cutting and pulling out a series of cylinders of ice, each one metre long and 10cm wide.

INBRIEF

StanChart closes deal with Akasa Air for 5 Boeing aircraft

Standard Chartered Bank said it has successfully closed an operating lease of five new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft with India's private carrier Akasa Air. The deal was structured, financed and arranged exclusively by Standard Chartered Aviation Finance. The first four aircraft (MAX 8) were delivered between December 2022 and March 2023 and the fifth aircraft is scheduled for delivery in second quarter of 2023.

IRB Infrastructure Trust lists on National Stock Exchange

IRB Infrastructure Trust, a privately-placed InvIT sponsored by IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd. with investment from GIC Affiliate, listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Monday. MMK Toll Road Pvt. Ltd, an investment manager to the trust, had approved the listing of the trust's units on the NSE. "The idea behind this (the listing) was to have better disclosure norms and bring in more transparency," said Virendra D. Mhaiskar, chairman, IRB Infrastructure Trust.

NRL's bio-refinery likely to go on stream in 2023: Centre

The bio-refinery with bamboo biomass as feedstock, being implemented by Numaligarh Refinery (NRL) in partnership with two European firms, is expected to be commissioned by 2023, according to the Centre. On commissioning, the joint venture would produce 49,000 tonnes of ethanol and other chemicals thus contributing to India's objective of achieving 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025. NRL is also expanding capacity from 3 million to 9 million tonnes.

'Manufacturing PMI rose to three-month high in March'

S&P Global suvey shows manufacturing firms' new orders and output advanced even as input cost inflation slid to second-lowest in two-and-a-half years; PMI reading rose to 56.4, from 55.3 in Feb.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

New orders and output rose to a three-month high in March even as input cost inflation for manufacturing firms slipped to the second-lowest mark in two-and-a-half years, the S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) indicated.

The PMI reading rose to 56.4, from 55.3 in February, signalling the strongest improvement in operating conditions in 2023 so far.

Core comfort

S&P Global's survey of manufacturing firms indicates resilient demand helped boost output to the highest level in 2023

- New export orders picked up pace sequentially, but remained 'slight and historically subdued'
- Outstanding business volumes, however, grew at the weakest in a year, compelling firms to halt fresh hiring after 12 months
- Overall positive sentiment slid to an eight-month low on concerns about general inflation

The PMI average for the January-March period was 55.7, lower than 56.3 in the previous quarter. New export orders grew at a faster pace in March than the previous month, but remained "slight and historically subdued," S&P Global noted, based on its survey.

Despite the broader rise in orders and output, manufacturing firms' outstanding business volumes grew only marginally at a pace that was the weakest in a year, compelling firms to desist from fresh hiring in March after 12 successive months of recording employment increases.

Moreover, the overall level of positive sentiment slipped to an eight-month low due to concerns surrounding competitiveness and general inflation.

Antitrust law gets more teeth, mergers to win swifter clearances

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Parliament cleared the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2023, on Monday, paving the way for the government to enact some significant changes to the country's antitrust regime, including swifter clearances for mergers and acquisitions (M&As).

The law also mandates that firms penalised by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) must fork out at least 25% of the penalties levied on them, for their appeals to be heard by an appellate tribunal. The definition of turnover has also been enlarged to mean "global turnover from all products and services of a contravening enterprise".

To make approvals for combinations (M&As) time-bound and quicker, the Bill cuts the overall time limit for assessment to 150 days, from 210 days, from the date of filing of notice by the parties. Moreover, the CCI will have to frame a "prima facie opinion" within 30 days from the receipt of such notice, failing which the combination shall be considered as deemed approved.

"While certain amendments are business-friendly and consistent with the government's ease of doing business mission, others may raise more uncertainty in their implementation," said Pallavi Shroff, managing partner at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	59,106	0.19
US Dollar	82.32	-0.13
Gold	59,480	-0.33
Brent oil	84.53	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	1717.45	-33.00
Adani Ports	627.80	-4.10
Apollo Hosp	4234.35	-76.55
Asian Paints	2777.00	15.35
Axis Bank	864.60	6.10
Bajaj Auto	3993.75	109.00
Bajaj Finserv	1282.95	16.45
Bajaj Finance	5715.05	98.30
Bharti Airtel	760.55	11.55
BPCL	329.95	-14.35
Britannia Ind	4324.05	1.90
Cipla	891.45	-9.05
Coal India	220.15	6.50
Divis Lab	2874.70	51.35
Dr Reddys Lab	4656.50	33.75
Eicher Motors	3004.30	55.45
Grasim Ind	1627.95	-4.75
HCL Tech	1098.15	12.90
HDFC	2628.95	3.45
HDFC Bank	1610.55	1.00
HDFC Life	503.70	4.50
Hero MotoCorp	2431.10	83.75
Hindalco	402.55	-2.80
Hind Unilever	2536.10	-24.25
ICICI Bank	883.80	6.55
IndusInd Bank	1078.75	10.80
Infosys	1410.85	-17.10
ITC	378.90	-4.60
JSW Steel	682.20	-5.90
Kotak Bank	1745.70	12.85
L&T	2170.15	5.95
M&M	1169.90	11.20
Maruti Suzuki	8503.05	210.90
NestleIndia	19705.45	0.95
NTPC	177.80	2.70
ONGC	153.65	2.60
PowerGrid Corp	224.60	-1.10
Reliance Ind	2331.45	0.40
SBI Life	1103.80	2.70
State Bank	526.75	3.00
Sun Pharma	979.05	-4.05
TataConsumerProduct	717.05	8.20
Tata Motors	424.25	3.45
Tata Steel	104.10	-0.40
TCS	3200.00	-5.90
Tech Mahindra	1103.20	1.35
Titan	2537.40	22.50
UltraTech Cement	7640.50	18.35
UPL	729.65	12.00
Wipro	367.95	2.70

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 03

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	82.13	82.45
Euro	89.30	89.64
British Pound	101.56	101.97
Japanese Yen (100)	61.63	61.87
Chinese Yuan	11.92	11.97
Swiss Franc	89.63	89.99
Singapore Dollar	61.71	61.96
Canadian Dollar	60.97	61.21
Malaysian Ringitt	18.58	18.66
Australian Dollar	55.25	55.47

Source:Indian Bank

Oil surges as OPEC+ surprise output cuts shake markets

Reuters
LONDON

Oil prices surged on Monday, posting the biggest daily rise in nearly a year, after a surprise announcement by OPEC+ to cut more production jolted markets.

Brent crude was trading at $84.22 a barrel by 0900 GMT, up $4.33, or 5.4%, after touching the highest in a month at $86.44 earlier in the session.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies including Russia shook markets by announcing further production cuts of about 1.16 million barrels per day (bpd) on Sunday.

The group, known as OPEC+, had been expected to maintain its earlier decision to cut output by 2 million bpd until December at its monthly meeting on Monday.

As a result, Goldman Sachs lowered its end-2023 production forecast for OPEC+ by 1.1 million bpd and raised its Brent price forecasts to $95 and $100 a barrel for 2023 and 2024, respectively, it said in a note to clients.

Centre in talks to boost India's rating

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Minister confirms talks with global rating agencies to improve India's credit rating

The Centre has been proactively engaging with prominent global credit rating agencies to improve India's sovereign credit rating, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary told the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Responding to a query on the country's creditworthiness raised by six MPs, Mr. Chaudhary confirmed the parleys with the rating agencies and said India's overall rating outlook perked up in the COVID-19 era.

Referring to talks with global rating agencies to upgrade India's rating, Mr. Chaudhary said concerted efforts have been made to sensitise them about the "fundamentals of the Indian economy, latest economic developments, fiscal consolidation and commitment to reforms".

He also reiterated the government's commitment to reduce India's fiscal deficit to below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26, from an estimated 6.4% of GDP in 2022-23.

SHFL plans to double small business loan operations

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Buoyed by the success of its small business loan operations, Sundaram Home Finance Ltd. (SHFL) plans to double the number of branches and staff in Tamil Nadu in six months.

According to the plan, SBL branches will be doubled from the existing 10 to more than 20 in Tamil Nadu and 100 people hired for the segment.

"We are hopeful of penetrating deep into the remote towns to finance and support the growth of smaller businesses in the State," said D. Lakshminarayanan, MD.

Indian Oil refineries achieve record 72.4 mt throughput in FY23

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Indian Oil Corporation's refineries achieved 72.4 million tonnes (mt) throughput, the highest ever, in 2022-23, while the State-owned oil major clocked about 14% increase in POL sales year-on-year.

In the previous fiscal, the refineries had clocked 67.67 mt.

Market share rises

Market share in petroleum products, of the oil company, increased to 42.9% in 2022-23 as against 40.8% in 2021-22.

Petrol sales were 19.2% more, diesel sales increased 19.3%, while LPG sales rose by about 1%, Indian Oil said.

On Monday, in a statement on the operational performance, IndianOil said its investment spending stood at an all time highest of ₹35,205 crore - ₹34,388 crore on its projects and ₹817 crore in JVs and subsidiaries.

"Despite challenging geopolitical situations, what stood out was our teams' perseverance and determination," Chairman S.M.Vaidya said in a statement.

At 94.7 mt (83.25 mt) IOC's liquid pipelines throughput in 2022-23 was the highest-ever, the company said.

Zoho's Vembu pushes for rules to check AI threat

The Hindu Bureau
TENKASI

The Centre should formulate a regulatory framework to ensure no one monopolises the emerging field of Artificial Intelligence, Sridhar Vembu, CEO of Zoho Corporation, told reporters on Monday.

"If AI were to produce all goods and service without human labour, how can we pay for those goods because there will be no jobs and hence no income. Any monopoly in AI will surely create such a situation which should not be allowed to happen by framing appropriate policies," Mr. Vembu said.

Sacked GM workers seek inclusion in pact with Hyundai Motor

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

With the Indian units of American automobile major General Motors and Korea's Hyundai Motor initiating steps for smooth transfer of the former's closed car manufacturing unit at Talegaon to the latter, more than 1,000 laid off GM workers have sought to be part of the proposed transfer deal.

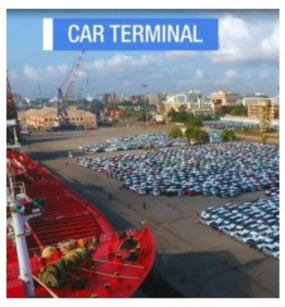
Hyundai Motor India on March 13 signed a term sheet for the potential acquisition of land and buildings and certain machinery and equipment at the Talegaon plant.

The laid off GM workers are peeved that there has been no mention about them in the term sheet.

"The employees have requested that all the permanent employees be transferred to Hyundai Motors and continue their employment. Hence, we request you to issue the necessary orders," an MLA from Maharashtra had written to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

'Car exports from 2 T.N. ports grew 24% in FY23'

N. Anand
CHENNAI



Chennai Port Authority (ChPA) and the Kamarajar Port Ltd. (KPL) recorded a 24% year-on-year increase in car exports during FY23, a top official said.

The ports shipped 3.8 lakh cars during FY23 against 3.06 lakh units in the year-earlier period.

While ChPA's car exports climbed 36%, KPL's volumes rose 9%.

Hyundai Motor and Kia Motors accounted for a major share of exports from ChPA. While Hyundai shipped 1.50 lakh cars, Kia exported 81,000 cars and Ford Motors 555 units, said Sunil Paliwal, chairman ChPA.

On future potential, Mr. Paliwal said: "Currently, KPL can handle about 16,500 cars at any given point of time. We are adding a parking yard to accommodate 3,500 cars, taking the total to 20,000 cars. This will be one of the largest parking yards among the 12 major ports in the country."

ChPA can handle 8,000 cars. A multi-level car parking is being readied to accommodate another 4,000 cars at a cost of ₹30 crore.

THE HINDU GROUP

FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984

The Amritpal Singh mystery

Who is Amritpal Singh? Frontline got one of the last interviews with the radical preacher and separatist before he went on the run. While the interview throws light on his meteoric rise, writers such as Manjit Singh, Amandeep Sandhu, and Saba Naqvi speak of what makes Punjab vulnerable to the likes of an Amritpal.

Rahul Gandhi vs the BJP. The battle for power between the Congress and the BJP gets uglier with each passing day. Where does this leave the so-called third bloc?

Mallika Sarabhai. The new Chancellor of the famed Kerala Kalamandalam outlines her plans to repurpose, refocus, and repackage the 93-year-old institute.

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April 7, 2023

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Moeen spins it Chennai Super Kings' way after the Ruturaj-Conway show

Off-spinner takes four to derail Super Giants' chase; CSK openers forge a 110-run stand in 9.1 overs; Dhoni's stunning sixes provide the perfect finish

Chennai Express: Ruturaj was in his element again before Moeen spun a web around the Lucknow batters. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

IPL-16

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

There were 11 sixes in the first 19 overs of the Chennai Super Kings innings against Lucknow Super Giants. But it was the maximums off the second and third deliveries of the final over that mattered the most for the capacity crowd which had turned up at the MAC Stadium on Monday.

Asked to bat, Super Kings made 217 for seven, thanks to the turbo-charged 110-run opening partnership between Ruturaj Gaikwad and Devon Conway.

M.S. Dhoni walked in to a rapturous welcome with five balls remaining. He smashed pacer Mark Wood over the third-man boundary off his first ball and pulled the next one over midwicket.

Though the CSK skipper fell immediately – he was caught at deep point – it was worth the wait for the fans as he helped the host finish strongly.

Chasing 218, Super Giants got off to a flyer with Kyle Mayers hitting boundaries at will in his 23-ball 53 (8x4, 2x6). Like always, Super Kings fell back on its spinners after the pacers were hit all over the park.

Once Dhoni introduced Moeen Ali into the attack, the complexion of the game changed. The England off-spinner removed dangerman Mayers and skipper K.L. Rahul in quick succession while New Zealand left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner accounted for No. 3 Deepak Hooda as the Lucknow side slid from 79 for no loss to 82 for three in the eighth over.

Super Giants' Nicholas Pooran (32, 18b, 2x4, 3x6) did his best before he was caught on the boundary by Ben Stokes off Tushar Deshpande. In the end, only a dozen runs separated Super Kings and Super Giants. Moeen finished with remarkable figures of 4-0-26-4 while Santner's spell read 4-0-21-1.

Earlier, Ruturaj began with a few boundaries off the pacers before turning his attention to off-spinner K. Gowtham, smashing him for three sixes down the ground in the fifth over.

At the other end, Conway joined the act and caught up with Ruturaj, cracking Krunal for two sixes over long-on as Super Kings reached the 100-mark in eight overs.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi pulled things back for the visitors with a tight spell (three for 28). Despite losing wickets at regular intervals, Super Kings never took the foot off the pedal. It was the two sixes by Dhoni that excited the fans the most as CSK celebrated its first home game in four years with a victory.

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
Ruturaj Gaikwad c Wood b Bishnoi 57 *(31b, 3x4, 4x6)*, Devon Conway c Krunal b Wood 47 *(29b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Shivam Dube c Wood b Bishnoi 27 *(16b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Moeen Ali st. Pooran b Bishnoi 19 *(13b, 3x4)*, Ben Stokes c Yash Thakur b Avesh 8 *(8b, 1x4)*, Ambati Rayudu (not out) 27 *(14b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja c Bishnoi b Wood 3 *(6b)*, M.S. Dhoni c Bishnoi b Wood 12 *(3b, 2x6)*, Mitchell Santner (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (b-4, lb-4, w-7, nb-1): 16; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 217.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-110 (Ruturaj, 9.1 overs), 2-118 (Conway, 10.2), 3-150 (Dube, 13.5), 4-166 (Moeen, 15.2), 5-178 (Stokes, 16.6), 6-203 (Jadeja, 19.1), 7-215 (Dhoni, 19.4).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Mayers 2-0-16-0, Avesh 3-0-39-1, Krunal 2-0-21-0, Gowtham 1-0-20-0, Wood 4-0-49-3, Yash Thakur 4-0-36-0, Bishnoi 4-0-28-3.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
K.L. Rahul c Ruturaj b Moeen 20 (18b, 2x4), Kyle Mayers c Conway b Moeen 53 (22b, 8x4, 2x6), Deepak Hooda c Stokes b Santner 2 (6b), Krunal Pandya c Jadeja b Moeen 9 (9b, 1x6), Marcus Stoinis b Moeen 21 (18b, 1x6), Nicholas Pooran c Stokes b Deshpande 32 (18b, 2x4, 3x6), Ayush Badoni **(Impact Player in place of Avesh)** c Dhoni b Deshpande 23 (18b), K. Gowtham (not out) 17 (11b, 1x6), Mark Wood (not out) 10 (3b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-2, w-13, nb-3): 18; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 205.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-79 (Mayers, 5.3), 2-82 (Hooda, 6.6), 3-82 (Rahul, 7.2), 4-105 (Krunal, 9.6), 5-130 (Stoinis, 13.2), 6-156 (Pooran, 15.6), 7-195 (Badoni, 19.3).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING
Deepak Chahar 4-0-55-0, Stokes 1-0-18-0, Deshpande **(Impact Player in place of Rayudu)** 4-0-45-2, Moeen 4-0-26-4, Santner 4-0-21-1, Hangargekar 2-0-24-0, Jadeja 1-0-14-0.

Toss: Super Giants.
PoM: Moeen.
CSK won by 12 runs.

IPL's 5000-run club

	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s
Kohli	216	**6706**	113	129.50	5/45
Dhawan	206	**6284**	106*	126.41	2/47
Warner	163	**5937**	126	140.42	4/56
Rohit	223	**5880**	109*	129.62	1/40
Raina	200	**5528**	100*	136.73	1/39
de Villiers	170	**5162**	133*	151.68	3/40
Dhoni	**208**	**5004**	**84***	**135.53**	**0/24**

* Except Kohli who has played only for RCB, the others have represented two or more franchises

Next assignment

LSG: April 7 vs. SRH Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

CSK: April 8 vs. MI Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

Titans have reasons to be optimistic against Capitals

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Having taken off on the wrong foot, Delhi Capitals will be hoping for a change in fortunes against Gujarat Titans as it prepares to kick off its home campaign on Tuesday.

Though there is no distinct 'home advantage' to talk about, the crowd at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground is the only factor David Warner and his men will be drawing from.

After a forgettable opener against Lucknow Super Giants, Capitals will be keen to make a difference.

Capitals need the services of South African pace duo of Anrich Nortje and Lungi Ngidi in their campaign. But it remains to be seen whether coach Ricky Ponting would rush the inclusion of one of the two bowlers on their arrival from Johannesburg for Tuesday's encounter.

Further, besides fielding, Capitals face wicketkeeping issues.

Abhishek Porel, the youngster who replaced Rishabh Pant, could get a match if the team decides to look beyond Sarfaraz Khan as a gloveman.

In fact, the absence of a second, experienced wicketkeeping option could hurt Capitals.

Hard at work: Capitals will look for a change in fortunes against Giants after the misstep in the opener. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Today's match

DELHI CAPITALS vs. GUJARAT TITANS

Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 1
DC 0 | GT 1

ONLY MEETING
GT won by **14 runs**, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Capitals need the services of South African pace duo of Anrich Nortje and Lungi Ngidi in their campaign

Titans, in spite of losing Kane Williamson for the season, appear keen to build on a sound start.

Miller may be included

After a satisfying outing against Super Kings, Titans could consider the option of including David Miller.

With Shubman Gill, Wriddhiman Saha, Sai Sudarshan, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan and Mohammad Shami riding on a good campaign-opener, Titans have reasons to be optimistic against a worried opposition.

Showstopper Kohli's perfect homecoming gives Royal Challengers' faithful a night to remember

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

In the days leading up to Royal Challengers Bangalore's opening IPL 2023 match against Mumbai Indians, the hype and anticipation was palpable. On match day on Sunday, the excitement was through the roof as RCB made its return to the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium after a gap of nearly four years.

The packed house clamoured to see the showstopper - Virat Kohli. The superstar gave the fans a memorable night out, blasting an unbeaten 49-ball 82 to power RCB to a comfortable eight-wicket win.

Kohli was expected to be tested by England pace ace Jofra Archer, but it was the batter to emerged the clear winner. He stepped out to smack Archer over long-off, and flicked a short ball into the deep square-leg stands.

Kohli settled into the opener slot well, alongside skipper Faf du Plessis. The South African played the aggressor to begin with, while Kohli moved into top gear a little while later. A clinical 148-run opening stand between Kohli and du Plessis flattened MI.

It was the perfect homecoming for Kohli. "The crowd was phenomenal. Every seat was full when we walked into the ground. We knew we would get a lot of support. We ride on the intensity of the crowd; their energy propelled us. When Faf and I were batting, they were cheering us on. That makes a massive difference," Kohli told the host broadcaster.

On his partnership with du Plessis, Kohli said, "Faf and I got off to the perfect start. The new ball was tricky, but the way we (Faf and Kohli) started, it nullified all intensity that MI brought to the field. Faf and I kept putting pressure on the bowlers, which was crucial."

In regal touch: Kohli marked his return to the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium with a sublime knock. K. MURALI KUMAR

Kohli in opening games in IPL

1 (5b) vs. **KKR**, Bengaluru, 2008	75 (51b, 7x4, 3x6) vs. **SRH**, Bengaluru, 2016
3 (8b) vs. **RR**, Newlands, 2009	62 (47b, 5x4, 2x6) vs. **MI**, Bengaluru, 2017
2 (5b) vs. **KKR**, Kolkata, 2010	31 (33b, 1x4, 1x6) vs. **KKR**, Kolkata, 2018
23 (18b, 4x4) vs. **Tuskers**, Kochi, 2011	6 (12b) vs. **CSK**, Chennai, 2019
8 (8b, 1x4) vs. **Daredevils**, Bengaluru, 2012	14 (13b) vs. **SRH**, Dubai, 2020
24 (14b, 4x4, 1x6) vs. **MI**, Bengaluru, 2013	33 (29b, 4x4) vs. **MI**, Chennai, 2021
49 n.o. (38b, 2x4, 3x6) vs. **Daredevils**, Sharjah, 2014	41 (29b, 1x4, 2x6) vs. **PBKS**, Mumbai, 2022
13 (15b, 1x6) vs. **KKR**, Kolkata, 2015	82 n.o. (49b, 6x4, 5x6) vs. **MI**, Bengaluru, 2023

AN INSPIRATION

Gill's work ethic helps him in tough situations: Vijay Shankar

Shubman Gill's work ethic has helped him during tough times, Gujarat Titans all-rounder Vijay Shankar said on Monday. "Gill is an inspiration and it has been an honour to share the dressing room with him for Gujarat and earlier for India-A," said Vijay Shankar.

ON A ROLL

Medvedev beats Sinner for Miami Open title

Daniil Medvedev won his fourth ATP title of the year, beating Jannik Sinner 7-5, 6-3 in the Miami Open final. Medvedev is now the most sizzling player on the men's tour, winning 24 of his last 25 matches. His only loss has come against Carlos Alcaraz in the Indian Wells final.

ON TOP AGAIN

Djokovic takes World No. 1 spot back from Alcaraz

Novak Djokovic returned to No. 1 in ATP rankings on Monday, for a record 380th week, despite missing US tournaments last month. Carlos Alcaraz had taken the top ranking from Djokovic after victory in Indian Wells, but the Spaniard bowed out in the Miami semifinals on Friday.

SHORT STAY

Chelsea sacks Potter after just seven months in charge

Coach Graham Potter paid for Chelsea's poor form as he was sacked on Sunday after just seven months in the job. The Blues had slipped to 11th in the Premier League table despite spending over £500 million on new signings this season. Bruno Saltor has been placed in interim charge.

WINDFALL

Aussie women cricketers set to earn big in new deal

Australia's women cricketers secured a five-year pay increase deal with Cricket Australia on Monday, with the top contracted player, believed to be national captain Meg Lanning, set to earn more than A$1 million a year. Payments will rise 66% under the new deal.

INBRIEF

Bezzecchi claims maiden MotoGP win in Ducati sweep

Marco Bezzecchi claimed a maiden MotoGP win at the rain-lashed Argentina Grand Prix on Sunday, also delivering a first victory for a Ducati team owned by motorcycling legend and seven-time champion Valentino Rossi. Italian rider Bezzecchi finished ahead of Frenchman Johann Zarco with Alex Marquez, who started on pole position, rounding out an all-Ducati podium.

Koepka warms up for Masters with Orlando LIV victory

Four-time Major champion Brooks Koepka warmed up for next week's Masters with the second LIV Golf title of his career on Sunday after clinching a two-shot victory in Orlando. Koepka finished on 15-under and pocketed the $4 million winner's prize – $1.3 million more than the winner of next week's first Major of 2023 at Augusta. Koepka is the first player on the LIV Golf circuit to win two events.

Conners pips Stevens by a stroke to take Texas Open title

Corey Conners warmed up for his sixth Masters appearance with a victory in the Texas Open, his second USPGA Tour title in the same event where he won his first in 2019. Conners' 15-under 273 gave him a one-stroke win over American Sam Stevens. It was a confidence-building win as Conners heads to Augusta, where he finished tied for sixth last year. "I was really solid all day," Conners said. "I can't believe I got my second win here."

China's Yin claims first LPGA crown at Los Angeles Open

China's Yin Ruoning shook off an early bogey burst to card a one-under 70 and win her first US LPGA title at the Los Angeles Open, holding off Major winner Georgia Hall by one stroke. Yin, 20 and in her second season on the US Tour, ended with a 15-under 269 that put her one clear of Hall, who missed a six-foot birdie putt on the 18th that would have forced a playoff. Another pair of Major champions, Patty Tavatanakit and Kim Hyo-joo, shared third on 272.

Haris scores hat-trick as Parikrma FC wins big

Haris Rahman scored a hat-trick as Parikrma FC thrashed Income Tax 7-1 in the BDFA A-division football league in Bengaluru on Monday.

The results:
Parikrma 7 (Haris Rahman 27, 34, 72, Md. Arafas 30, S. Navaneeth 31, 33, E. Anish Kumar 60) bt Income Tax 1 (Apeto Sema 76).

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Ireland: Only Test, day 1, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 12.15 a.m. (Wednesday)

Milan puts the brakes on Napoli's Serie A title charge

Lazio gets the better of Monza, Roma does the same with Sampdoria; Benzema's seven-minute hat-trick highlights Real Madrid's win over Vallodolid

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
ROME

AC Milan hammered runaway Serie A leader Napoli 4-0 on Sunday in an incredible performance which slammed the brakes on its opponent's charge to a first league title since 1990.

Rafael Leao led the charge with a brilliant brace while Brahim Diaz and Alexis Saelemaekers netted the other goals for the rampant champion which moves up to third.

Stefano Pioli's side inflicted a third league defeat of the season on Napoli, whose huge lead at the top of the table has been cut to 16 points after second-placed Lazio beat Monza 2-0 earlier on Sunday.

First blood

Milan is 20 points off the pace but has struck first blood in a trio of matches against Napoli which will conclude this month with the two-legged Champions League quarterfinal between the two Italian teams.

Pedro's low finish in the 13th minute and a sensational free-kick from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic 10 minutes after half-time gave Lazio its fifth win in six league matches at Monza.

Milinkovic-Savic's goal was his first since scoring against Milan in January and his 65th for Lazio, making him the club's highest ever foreign goalscorer.

Roma overcame 10-man Sampdoria in Rome thanks to Georginio Wijnaldum's header six minutes into the second half and two late goals from Paulo Dybala and Stephan El Shaarawy.

Karim Benzema scored a stunning hat-trick in a seven-minute salvo as Real Madrid thumped Real Valladolid 6-0 on Sunday in La Liga.

Champion Real Madrid, second, sits 12 points behind leader Barcelona, with 11 games remaining each.

The race for a top four spot intensified as Villarreal, sixth, beat fourth-place Real Sociedad 2-0, and Atletico Madrid earned a 1-0 win over Betis in fifth.

Bullet strike: Rafael Leao fires in Milan's third in the rout of Napoli. AP

The results: Premier League: Newcastle 2 (Willock 65, Wilson 88) bt Manchester United 0.

La Liga: Real Madrid 6 (Rodrygo 22, Benzema 29, 32, 36, Asensio 73, Vazquez 90+2) bt Real Valladolid 0; Villarreal 2 (Parejo 77-pen, Jackson 81) bt Real Sociedad 0; Atletico Madrid 1 (Correa 86) bt Real Betis 0.

Serie A: Napoli 0 lost to AC Milan 4 (Leao 17, 59, Diaz 25, Saelemaekers 67); Roma 3 (Wijnaldum 57, Dybala 89-pen, El Shaarawy 90+4) bt Sampdoria 0.

Bundesliga: Cologne 0 lost to Borussia M'Gladbach 0; Werder Bremen 1 (Pieper 76) lost to Hoffenheim 2 (Kramaric 50, Baumgartner 52).

Manas to spearhead Indian challenge

JR. DAVIS CUP

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manas Dhamne will spearhead the Indian under-16 boys' team in the Asia-Oceania Junior Davis Cup tennis tournament to be played in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, in May.

The 15-year-old has already played the men's ATP tournament in Pune, apart from a bunch of men's tournaments including a Challenger.

He was ranked 43 in the world in under-18 in January this year, and managed to win a round at the junior event of the Australian Open.

Kriish Tyagi and Aarjun Pandit will be the other members of the team. Sajid Lodi will be the captain.

The girls' team will have Asmi Adkar, Aakruti Sonkusare and Sejal Bhutada, with Shivika Burman as the captain.

The girls' tournament is scheduled from May 1. The boys' event will be played the following week.

The team: Boys: Manas Dhamne, Kriish Tyagi, Aarjun Pandit. Captain: Sajid Lodi.
Girls: Asmi Adkar, Aakruti Sonkusare, Sejal Bhutada. Captain: Shivika Burman.

Bangladesh keen to remain aggressive in Ireland Test

CRICKET

Associated Press
MIRPUR

Bangladesh is eager to continue playing an attacking brand of cricket against inexperienced Ireland when its one-off Test match starts on Tuesday.

Being aggressive paid off as Bangladesh dominated the Irish in winning both the one-day series 2-0 and the T20 series 2-1.

Captain Shakib Al Hasan hinted at keeping the same approach, no matter the format. Mehidy Hasan echoed his skipper's sentiment, making it clear the plan will stay the same.

"Every team has been trying to play an attacking brand of cricket in modern day. Teams are trying to attack even in the Test format so obviously we'll try to do the same," Mehidy said.

"There will be small technical changes since it is the longer format but the mindset will be aggressive. At the end of the day, scoring runs counts, no matter what the format is. If you can score 350-400 runs in 100 overs, it will be good for you and your team."

Kerala Blasters, coach Vukomanovic express regret for walkout

ISL-9

Sports Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala Blasters and their head coach Ivan Vukomanovic have expressed regret for their walkout during the ISL playoff match against Bengaluru FC in Bengaluru on March 3.

"It has been a couple of weeks since we were all caught by negative circumstances that happened on March 3. It is certainly devastating to all football fans to witness such a thing... no one deserves nor wants to be an actor of such an event," said a statement from Vukomanovic which came late on Sunday.

Vukomanovic. FOCUS SPORTS/ ISL

"These things are not supposed to be seen in sport arenas around the world and I regret being part of such a moment."

Heat of the moment

The Blasters' statement said the walkout, which saw the AIFF's Disciplinary Committee punish the club with a ₹4 crore fine a couple of days ago and demand a public apology, was taken in the heat of the moment.

"We would like to express our sincerest regrets for the event that took place during the match. We recognise that our decision to walk off the pitch prematurely was unfortunate and taken in the heat of the moment," said the Blasters.

"We would like to reiterate our respect for the larger football fraternity and assure everyone that we will take necessary measures to prevent such incidents from happening again in the future."

The Disciplinary Committee had threatened to increase the Blasters' fine to ₹6 crore and Vukomanovic's penalty to ₹10 lakh (from ₹5 lakh earlier which came along with a 10-match suspension) if the public apology did not come about in a week's time.

'The elephant is in the room': Klopp on record sackings

Reuters
LONDON

Liverpool boss Juergen Klopp jokingly questioned why he still had a job as clubs around the Premier League sacked their managers as the season enters its home stretch.

Chelsea sacked Graham Potter on Sunday with the club sitting 11th in the league, hours after relegation-threatened Leicester City parted ways with Brendan Rodgers. Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur also parted ways with Antonio Conte late last month.

"What can I say about that (the sackings)? The elephant in the room is probably why am I still sitting here in this crazy world? Last man standing," Klopp told reporters ahead of Tuesday's game against Chelsea.

The Premier League has had a record 12 managers sacked this season.

Mercedes' hopes revived despite Red Bull's authority in Australia

FORMULA ONE

Agence France Presse
MELBOURNE

Red Bull ace Max Verstappen might have dominated a wild Australian Grand Prix, but Mercedes was also a big winner with the "Silver Arrows" finally starting to look competitive.

After the season-opening Grand Prix in Bahrain, team boss Toto Wolff declared it had "one of its worst days" in racing, with Lewis Hamilton complaining of becoming "the fourth-fastest team".

It followed a lacklustre 2022 when the eight-time constructors champion was dethroned by Red Bull, with the outlook bleak heading into the new year.

But it made strides in Saudi Arabia and is now singing a different tune after seven-time world champion Hamilton came second to pole-sitter Verstappen, at one stage briefly leading the action-packed race.

Positive: Hamilton feels Mercedes has to keep fighting and is confident of the team closing the gap. GETTY IMAGES

His teammate George Russell was also lightning-quick and in the hunt before a power unit failure ended his day on lap 17.

It followed a stirring qualifying session that saw both Mercedes outpace Fernando Alonso in his rejuvenated Aston Martin and the struggling Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz.

"Considering we're down on performance, to be fighting with the Aston Martins is amazing for us at this point in the season," said an upbeat Hamilton after holding off a surging Alonso, and overcoming battles with safety cars and three red flags.

"We've just got to keep fighting. A big thank you to all the people back at the factory.

" We can close that gap, it's going to be tough but not impossible."

With a three-week break till the next race in Azerbaijan, Wolff said the team would take the learnings from Australia and keep moving forward.

Strong pace

"We had strong pace and it was really close with the Aston Martins and the Ferraris.

"That is good news for us, and I think we have made a step forward this weekend, both on one-lap and race pace," he said.

"We maximised what we have, and we need to now comb through the data and continue to learn about the car.

"This will help bring the upgrade packages and that will be the key in challenging the leaders more often."

Different level

Nevertheless, Red Bull remains on a different level, with Sergio Perez able to slice through the field to finish fifth, banking the fastest lap in the process, despite starting last after brake issues wrecked his qualifying.

Vaishali holds Humpy; Harika loses

FIDE WOMEN'S GP

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Aleksandra Goryachkina stamped her authority over D. Harika in 60 moves to stay in contention for the title after R. Vaishali proved equal to K. Humpy in the ninth round of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here on Monday. Harika erred early on and then tried to catch up but in vain. Eventually, Goryachkina had four connected passed pawns to Harika's lone pawn on the kingside when the Indian gave up. Humpy failed to get any advantage against a solid Vaishali on this day during their 31-move deadlock.

The results (Indians unless stated): Ninth round: R. Vaishali (2) drew with K. Humpy (3.5); Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE, 5) bt D. Harika (3); Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 5.5) drew with Nana Dzagnidze (Geo, 2.5); Nino Batsiashvili (Geo, 2.5) bt Polina Shuvalova (FIDE, 3.5); Zhu Jiner (Chn, 4.5), Kateryna Lagno (FIDE, 4) bye.